

Murphy 1776
**THE DRAMATIC
WORKS**

O F

SAMUEL FOOTE, Esq;

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

CONTAINING

The PATRON.

The LAME LOVER.

The COMMISSARY.

Dr. LAST in his CHARIOT.

BANKRUPT.



LONDON:

Printed for P. VAILLANT, and T. LOWNDES.

THE DRAMATIC

W O R K S



THE
PATRON.
A
COMEDY,
In THREE ACTS.

As it is performed at the
THEATRE in the HAY-MARKET.

By SAMUEL FOOTE, Esq;

The THIRD EDITION.

L O N D O N,
Printed for P. VAILLANT, T. LOWNDES, T. CASLON,
and W. NICOLL. M.DCC.LXXIV.

[Price One Shilling and Six-pence.]

P. A. T. O. R.

C. O. M. M. O. N.



T O T H E
RIGHT HONOURABLE
Granville Leveson Gower,
Earl Gower, Lord Chamberlain of his
Majesty's Household.

MY LORD,

THE following little Comedy, founded on a story of M. Marmontelle's, and calculated to expose the frivolity and ignorance of the pretenders to learning, with the insolence and vanity of their superficial, illiberal protectors, can be addressed to no Nobleman with more propriety than to Lord Gower; whose judgment, though elegant, is void of affectation; and whose patronage, though powerful, is destitute of all fastidious parade. It is with pleasure, my Lord, that the public sees your Lordship placed at the head of that department which is to decide, without appeal,

on the most popular domain in the whole republic of letters; a spot that has always been distinguished with affection, and cultivated with care, by every ruler the least attentive to either chastising the morals, polishing the manners, or, what is of equal importance, rationally amusing the leisure of the people.

The Patron, my Lord, who now begs your protection, has had the good fortune to be well received by the public; and indeed, of all the pieces that I have had the honour to offer them, this seems to me to have the fairest claim to their favour.

But the play, stripped of those theatrical ornaments for which it is indebted to your Lordship's indulgence, must now plead its own cause; nor will I, my Lord, with an affected humility, echo the trite, coarse, though classical compliment, of *Optimus patronus pessimus poeta*: For if this be really true of the last, the first can have but small pretensions to praise; patronizing bad poets being, in my poor opinion, full as pernicious to the progress of letters, as neglecting the good.

In

DEDICATION.

v

In humble hopes, then, my Lord, of not being thought the meanest in the muses train, I have taken the liberty to prefix your name to this Dedication, and publickly to acknowledge my obligations to your Lordship; which, let me boast too, I have had the happiness to receive, untainted by the insolence of domestics, the delays of office, or the chilling superiority of rank; mortifications which have been too often experienced by much greater writers than myself, from much less men than your Lordship.

My Lord, I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect and gratitude,

Your Lordship's most oblig'd,

and most devoted,

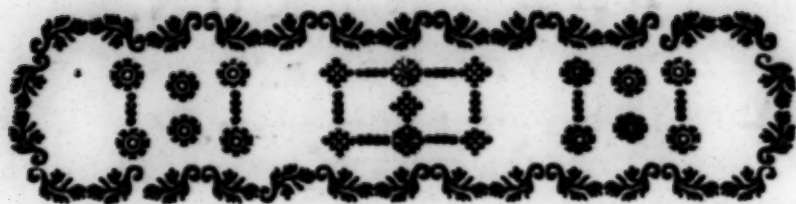
humble servant,

West-End,
June 20, 1764.

SAMUEL FOOTE.

Dramatis Personæ.

Sir THOMAS LOFTY,	} Mr. FOOTE,
Sir PETER PEPPERPOT,	
DICK BEVER,	Mr. DEATH,
FRANK YOUNGER,	Mr. DAVIS.
Sir ROGER DOWLAS,	Mr. PALMER,
Mr. RUST,	Mr. WESTON,
Mr. DACTYL,	Mr. GRANGER.
Mr. PUFF,	Mr. HAYES.
Mr. STAYTAPE,	Mr. BROWN.
ROBIN,	Mr. PARSONS.
JOHN,	Mr. LEWIS.
Two Blacks.	
Miss JULIET,	Mrs. GRANGER.



THE
PATRON.

ACT I.

Scene the Street.

Enter BEVER and YOUNGER.

YOUNGER.

O, Dick, you must pardon me.

BEVER.

Nay, but to satisfy your curiosity.

YOUNGER.

I tell you, I have not a jot.

BEVER.

Why then to gratify me.

A 4

YOUNGER.



2 THE PATRON.

YOUNGER.

At rather too great an expence.

BEVER.

To a fellow of your observation and turn, I should think, now, such a scene a most delicate treat.

YOUNGER.

Delicate ! Palling, nauseous, to a dreadful degree. To a lover, indeed, the charms of the niece may palliate the uncle's fulsome formality.

BEVER.

The uncle ! aye, but then you know he is only one of the group.

YOUNGER.

That's true ; but the figures are all finish'd alike. A maniere, a tiresome sameness throughout.

BEVER.

There you will excuse me ; I am sure there is no want of variety.

YOUNGER.

No ! then let us have a detail. Come, Dick, give us a bill of the play.

BEVER.

First, you know, there's Juliet's uncle.

YOUNGER.

What, Sir Thomas Lofty ! the modern Midas, or rather (as fifty dedications will tell

THE PATRON. 3

tell you) the Pollio, the Atticus, the patron of genius, the protector of arts, the paragon of poets, decider on merit, chief justice of taste, and sworn appraiser to Apollo and the tuneful nine. Ha, ha! Oh, the tedious, insipid, insufferable coxcomb!

BEVER.

Nay, now, Frank, you are too extravagant. He is universally allow'd to have taste; sharp-judging Adriel, the muse's friend, himself a muse.

YOUNGER.

Taste! by who? underling bards, that he feeds; and broken booksellers, that he bribes. Look ye, Dick, what raptures you please when Miss Lofty is your theme, but expect no quarter for the rest of the family. I tell thee once for all, Lofty is a rank impostor, the buffo of an illiberal mercenary tribe; he has neither genius to create, judgment to distinguish, nor generosity to reward; his wealth has gain'd him flattery from the indigent, and the haughty insolence of his pretence, admiration from the ignorant. *Voilà le portrait de votre oncle.* Now on to the next.

BEVER.

The ingenious and erudite Mr. Rust.

YOUNGER,

THE PATRON.

YOUNGER.

What, old Martin, the medal-monger?

BEVER.

The same, and my rival in Juliet.

YOUNGER.

Rival! what, Rust? why, she's too modern for him by a couple of centuries. Martin! why he likes no heads but upon coins. Marry'd! the mummy! Why 'tis not above a fortnight ago, that I saw him making love to the figure without a nose, in Somerset-Gardens: I caught him stroaking the marble plaits of her gown, and asked him if he was not ashamed to take such liberties with Ladies in public?

BEVER.

What an inconstant old scoundrel it is.

YOUNGER.

Oh, a Dorimant. But how came this about? what could occasion the change? was it in the power of flesh and blood to seduce this adorer of virtù from his marble and porphyry?

BEVER.

Juliet has done it; and, what will surprise you, his taste was a bawd to the business.

YOUNGER.

THE PATRON.

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YOUNGER.

Prythee explain.

BEVER.

Juliet met him last week at her uncle's: he was a little pleased with the Greek of her profile; but, on a closer enquiry, he found the turn-up of her nose too exactly resemble the bust of the Princess Popæa.

YOUNGER.

The chaste moiety of the amiable Nero.

BEVER.

The same,

YOUNGER.

Oh, the deuce! then your business was done in an instant.

BEVER.

Immediately. In favour of the tip, he offered *chart blanche* for the rest of the figure, which, (as you may suppose,) was instantly caught at.

YOUNGER.

Doubtless. But who have we here?

BEVER.

This is one of Lofty's companions, a West-Indian of an over-grown fortune. He saves me the trouble of a portrait, This is Sir Peter Pepperpot.

Enter

6 THE PATRON.

Enter Sir PETER PEPPERPOT, and two Blacks.

Sir PETER.

Careless scoundrels! harkee, rascals! I'll banish you home, you dogs! you shall back, and broil in the sun. Mr. Bever, your humble; Sir, I am your entirely devoted.

BEVER.

You seem mov'd; what has been the matter, Sir Peter?

Sir PETER.

Matter! why I am invited to dinner on a barbicu, and the villains have forgot my bottle of chian.

YOUNGER.

Unpardonable.

Sir PETER.

Aye, this country has spoil'd them; this same christening will ruin the colonies. --- Well, dear Bever, rare news, boy; our fleet is arriv'd from the West.

BEVER.

It is?

Sir PETER.

Aye, lad, and a glorious cargo of turtle. It was lucky I went to Brighthelmstone; I nick'd the time to a hair; thin as a lath,
and

THE PATRON. 7

and a stomach as sharp as a shark's : Never was in finer condition for feeding.

BEVER.

Have you a large importation, Sir Peter ?

Sir PETER.

Nine ; but seven in excellent order : The Captain assures me they greatly gain'd ground on the voyage.

BEVER.

How do you dispose of them ?

Sir PETER.

Four to Cornhill, three to Almack's, and the two sickly ones I shall send to my borough in Yorkshire.

YOUNGER.

Aye, what, have the Provincials a relish for turtle ?

Sir PETER.

Sir, it is amazing how this country improves in turtle and turnpikes ; to which (give me leave to say,) we, from our part of the world, have not a little contributed. Why formerly, Sir, a brace of bucks, on the Mayor's annual day, was thought a pretty moderate blessing. But we, Sir, have polish'd their palates : Why, Sir, not the meanest member of my Corporation but can distinguish the pash from the pee.

YOUNGER.

8 THE PATRON.

YOUNGER.

Indeed!

Sir PETER.

Aye, and sever the green from the shell,
with the skill of the ablest anatomist.

YOUNGER.

And are they fond of it?

Sir PETER.

Oh, that the consumption will tell
you. The stated allowance is six pounds
to an Alderman, and five to each of their
wives.

BEVER.

A plentiful provision.

Sir PETER.

But there was never known any waste:
The Mayor, Recorder, and Rector, are per-
mitted to eat as much as they please.

YOUNGER.

The entertainment is pretty expensive.

Sir PETER.

Land-carriage, and all. But I contriv'd
to smuggle the last that I sent them.

BEVER.

Smuggle! I don't understand you.

Sir PETER.

Why, Sir, the rascally Coachman had
always charged me five pounds for the car-
riage. Damn'd dear! Now my Cook go-
ing

T H E P A T R O N. 9

ing at the same time into the country, I made him clap a capuchin upon the turtle, and for thirty shillings put him an inside passenger in the Doncaster Fly.

Y O U N G E R.

A happy expedient.

B E V E R.

Oh, Sir Peter has infinite humour.

Sir P E T E R.

Yes, but the frolick had like to have prov'd fatal.

Y O U N G E R.

How so?

Sir P E T E R.

The maid at the Rummer, at Hatfield, popp'd her head into the coach, to know if the company would have any breakfast: Ecod, the turtle, Sir, laid hold of her nose, and flapp'd her face with his fins, till the poor devil fell into a fit. Ha, ha, ha!

Y O U N G E R.

Oh, an absolute Rabelais.

B E V E R.

What, I reckon, Sir Peter, you are going to the Square?

Sir P E T E R.

Yes; I extremely admire Sir Thomas: You know this is his day of assembly; I suppose

10 THE PATRON.

suppose you will be there: I can tell you, you are a wonderful favourite.

BEVER.

Am I?

Sir PETER.

He says, your natural genius is fine; and when polish'd by his cultivation, will surprize and astonish the world.

BEVER.

I hope, Sir, I shall have your voice with the public.

Sir PETER.

Mine! O fye, Mr. Bever.

BEVER.

Come, come, you are no inconsiderable Patron.

Sir PETER.

He, he, he! Can't say but I love to encourage the Arts.

BEVER.

And have contributed largely yourself.

YOUNGER.

What, is Sir Peter an Author?

Sir PETER.

O fye! what me? a mere dabbler; have blotted my fingers, 'tis true. Some sonnets, that have not been thought wanting in salt.

BEVER.

And your epigrams.

Sir

THE PATRON. 11

Sir PETER.

Not entirely without point.

BEVER.

But come, Sir Peter, the love of the arts is not the sole cause of your visits to the house you are going to.

Sir PETER.

I don't understand you.

BEVER.

Miss Juliet, the niece.

Sir PETER.

O fye! what chance have I there? Indeed if Lady Pepperpot should happen to pop off —

BEVER.

I don't know that. You are, Sir Peter, a dangerous man; and were I a father, or uncle, I should not be a little shy of your visits.

Sir PETER.

Psha! dear Bever, you banter.

BEVER.

And (unless I am extremely out in my guess,) that Lady —

Sir PETER.

Hey! what, what, dear Bever?

BEVER.

But if you should betray me —

B

Sir

Sir PETER.

May I never eat a bit of green fat, if I do.

BEVER.

Hints have been dropp'd.

Sir PETER.

The devil! come a little this way.

BEVER.

Well made; not robust and gigantic, 'tis true, but extremely genteel.

Sir PETER.

Indeed!

BEVER.

Features, not entirely regular; but marking, with an air now, superior; greatly above the — you understand me?

Sir PETER.

Perfectly. Something noble; expressive of --- fashion.

BEVER.

Right.

Sir PETER.

Yes, I have been frequently told so.

BEVER.

Not an absolute wit; but something infinitely better: An *enjouement*, a spirit, a ---

Sir PETER.

Gaiety. I was ever so from a child.

BEVER.

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BEVER.

In short, your dress, address, with a thousand other particulars that at present I can't recollect.

Sir PETER.

Why, dear Bever, to tell thee the truth, I have always admir'd Miss Juliet, and a delicate creature she is: Sweet as a sugar-cane, strait as a bamboo, and her teeth as white as a negro's.

BEVER.

Poetic, but true. Now only conceive, Sir Peter, such a plantation of perfections to be devoured by that caterpillar, Rust.

Sir PETER.

A liquorish grub! Are pine-apples for such muckworms as he? I'll send him a jar of citrons and ginger, and poison the pipkin.

BEVER.

No, no.

Sir PETER.

Or invite him to dinner, and mix rat's-bane along with his curry.

BEVER.

Not so precipitate; I think we may defeat him without any danger.

Sir PETER.

How, how?

B 2

BEVER.

BEVER.

I have a thought---but we must settle the plan with the Lady. Could not you give her the hint, that I should be glad to see her a moment.

Sir PETER.

I'll do it directly.

BEVER.

But don't let Sir Thomas perceive you.

Sir PETER.

Never fear. You'll follow.

BEVER.

The instant I have settled matters with her; but fix the old fellow so that she may not be miss'd.

Sir PETER.

I'll nail him, I warrant; I have his opinion to beg on this manuscript.

BEVER.

Your own?

Sir PETER.

No.

BEVER.

Oh ho! what something new from the Doctor, your Chaplain?

Sir PETER.

He! no, no. O Lord, he's elop'd.

BEVER.

How!

Sir

THE PATRON. 15

Sir PETER.

Gone. You know he was to dedicate his volume of fables to me : So I gave him thirty pounds to get my arms engrav'd, to prefix (by way of print) to the frontispiece ; and, O grief of griefs ! the Doctor has mov'd off with the money. I'll send you Miss Juliet. *[Exit.*

BEVER.

There, now, is a special protector ; the arts, I think, can't but flourish under such a Mecænas.

YOUNGER.

Heaven visits with a taste the wealthy fool.

BEVER.

True ; but then to justify the dispensation,

From hence the poor are cloath'd, the hungry fed,
Fortunes to Booksellers, to Authors bread.

YOUNGER.

The distribution is, I own, a little unequal : And here comes a most melancholy instance ; poor Dick Dactyl, and his Publisher, Puff.

B 3

Enter

Enter DACTYL and PUFF.

PUFF.

Why, then, Mr. Daetyl, carry them to somebody else; there are people enough in the trade; but I wonder you would meddle with poetry; you know it rarely pays for the paper.

DACTYL.

And how can one help it, Mr. Puff? Genius impels; and when a man is once listed in the service of the Muses ---

PUFF.

Why, let him give them warning as soon as he can. A pretty sort of service, indeed! where there are neither wages, nor vails. The Muses! And what, I suppose this is the livery they give. Gadzooks, I had rather be a Waiter at Ranelagh.

BEVER.

The Poet and Publisher at variance! What is the matter, Mr. Daetyl?

DACTYL.

As Gad shall judge me, Mr. Bever, as pretty a poem, and so polite; not a mortal can take any offence; all full of panegyric and praise.

PUFF.

P U F F.

A fine character he gives of his works. No offence ! the greatest in the world, Mr. Daetyl. Panegyric and praise ! and what will that do with the publick ? why who the devil will give money to be told, that Mr. Such-a-one is a wiser or better man than himself ? No, no ; 'tis quite and clean out of nature. A good soufing satire now, well powdered with personal pepper, and seasoned with the spirit of party ; that demolishes a conspicuous character, and sinks him below our own level ; there, there, we are pleased ; there we chuckle ; and grin, and toss the half-crowns on the counter.

D A C T Y L.

Yes, and so get cropp'd for a libel.

P U F F.

Cropp'd ! aye, and the luckiest thing that can happen to you. Why, I would not give two-pence for an Author that is afraid of his ears. Writing, writing is, (as I may say,) Mr. Daetyl, a sort of a warfare, where none can be victor that is the least afraid of a scar. Why, zooks, Sir, I never got salt to my porridge till I mounted at the Royal Exchange.

B 4

B E V E R.

18 THE PATRON.

BEVER.

Indeed !

PUFF.

No, no ; that was the making of me. Then my name made a noise in the world. Talk of forked hills, and of Helicon ! romantic, and fabulous stuff. The true Castalian stream is a shower of eggs, and a pilory the Poet's Parnassus.

DACTYL.

Aye, to you, indeed, it may answer ; but what do we get for our pains ?

PUFF.

Why, what the deuce would you get ? food, fire, and fame. Why, you would not grow fat ! a corpulent Poet is a monster, a prodigy ! No, no ; spare diet is a spur to the fancy ; high feeding would but founder your Pegasus.

DACTYL.

Why, you impudent, illiterate rascal ! who is it you dare treat in this manner ?

PUFF.

Heyday ! what is the matter now ?

DACTYL.

And is this the return for all the obligations you owe me ? But no matter ; the world,

THE PATRON. 19

world, the world shall know what you are,
and how you have us'd me.

PUFF.

Do your worst ; I despise you.

DACTYL.

They shall be told from what a dunghill
you sprang. Gentlemen, if there be faith
in a finner, that fellow owes every shilling to
me.

PUFF.

To thee !

DACTYL.

Ay, Sirrah, to me. In what kind of
way did I find you ? then where and what
was your state ? Gentlemen, his shop was
a shed in Moorfields ; his kitchen, a broken
pipkin of charcoal ; and his bed-chamber,
under the counter.

PUFF.

I never was fond of expence ; I ever minded
my trade.

DACTYL.

Your trade ! and pray with what stock
did you trade ? I can give you the cata-
logue ; I believe it won't overburthen my
memory. Two odd volumes of Swift ; the
Life of Moll Flanders, with cuts ; the Five
Senses, printed and coloured by Overton ;
a few

20 THE PATRON.

a few classics, thumb'd and blotted by the boys of the Charter-house; with the trial of Dr. Sacheverel.

PUFF.

Malice.

DACTYL.

Then, Sirrah, I gave you my Canning :
it was she first set you afloat.

PUFF.

A grub.

DACTYL.

And it is not only my writings: You
know, Sirrah, what you owe to my phy-
sick.

BEVER.

How! a physician?

DACTYL.

Yes, Mr. Bever; physick and poetry.
Apollo is the patron of both: *Opifexque per
orbem dicor.*

PUFF.

His physick!

DACTYL.

My physick! ay, my physick: Why, dare
you deny it, you rascal! What, have you
forgot my powders for flatulent crudities?

PUFF.

No.

D A C-

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DACTYL.

My cosmetic lozenge, and sugar plumbs?

PUFF.

No.

DACTYL.

My coral for cutting of teeth, my potions,
my lotions, my pregnancy-drops, with my
paste for superfluous hairs?

PUFF.

No, no; have you done?

DACTYL.

No, no, no; but I believe this will suffice
for the present.

PUFF.

Now would not any mortal believe that
I ow'd my all to this fellow?

BEVER.

Why, indeed, Mr. Puff, the balance does
seem in his favour.

PUFF.

In his favour! why you don't give any
credit to him: A reptile, a bug, that owes
his very being to me.

DACTYL.

I, I, I!

PUFF.

You, you! What, I suppose you forget
your garret in Wine-office-court, when you
furnish'd

furnish'd paragraphs for the Farthing-post at twelve-pence a dozen.

DACTYL.

Fiction.

PUFF.

Then did not I get you made collector of casualties to the Whitehall and St. James's? but that post your laziness lost you. Gentlemen, he never brought them a robbery till the highwayman was going to be hang'd; a birth till the christening was over; nor a death till the hatchment was up.

DACTYL.

Mighty well!

PUFF.

And now, because the fellow has got a little in flesh, by being puff to the play-house this winter, (to which, by the bye, I got him appointed) he is as proud and as vain as Voltaire. But I shall soon have him under; the vacation will come.

DACTYL.

Let it.

PUFF.

Then I shall have him sneaking and cringing, hanging about me, and begging a bit of translation.

D A C-

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DACTYL.

I beg, I, for translation!

PUFF.

No, no, not a line; not if you would do it for two-pence a sheet. No boil'd beef and carrot at mornings; no more cold pudding and porter. You may take your leave of my shop.

DACTYL.

Your shop! then at parting I will leave you a legacy.

BEVER.

O fye, Mr. Daetyl!

PUFF.

Let him alone.

DACTYL.

Pray, Gentlemen, let me do myself justice.

BEVER.

Younger, restrain the Publisher's fire.

YOUNGER.

Fie, Gentlemen, such an illiberal combat: it is a scandal to the republic of letters.

BEVER.

Mr. Daetyl, an old man, a mechanic, beneath —

D A C -

DACTYL.

Sir, I am calm; that thought has restor'd
me. To your insignificancy you are in-
debted for safety. But what my generosity
has saved, my pen shall destroy.

PUFF.

Then you must get somebody to mend it.

DACTYL.

Adieu!

PUFF.

Farewell!

[Exeunt severally.]

BEVER.

Ha, ha, ha! come, let us along to the
Square.

Blockheads with reason wicked wits abhor,
But dunce with dunce is barb'rous civil war.

END of the FIRST ACT.

ACT



ACT II. *Scene continues.*

Enter BEVER and YOUNGER.

YOUNGER.

POOR Daſtyl! and dwells ſuch mighty
rage in little men? I hope there is no
danger of bloodſhed.

BEVER.

Oh, not in the leaſt: The *gens vatum*,
the nation of poets, though an irritable,
are yet a placable people. Their mutual
inter-eſts will ſoon bring them together
again.

YOUNGER.

But ſhall not we be late? The critical
ſenate is by this time aſſembled.

BEVER.

I warrant you, frequent and full; where
Stately Bufo, puff'd by ev'ry quill,
Sits like Apollo, on his forked hill.

But

26 THE PATRON.

But you know I must wait for Miss Lofty; I am now totally directed by her; she gives me the key to all Sir Thomas's foibles, and prescribes the most proper method to feed them; but what good purpose that will produce—

YOUNGER.

Is she clever, adroit?

BEVER.

Doubtless. I like your asking the question of me.

YOUNGER.

Then pay an implicit obedience: The Ladies, in these cases, generally know what they are about. The door opens.

BEVER.

It is Juliet, and with her old Rust. Enter, Frank: You know the Knight, so no introduction is wanted. [*Exit Younger.*] I should be glad to hear this reverend piece of lumber make love; the courtship must certainly be curious. Good manners stand by; by your leave I will listen a little. [*Bever retires.*]

Enter JULIET and RUST.

JULIET.

And your collection is large?

RUST:

RUST.

Most curious and capital. When, Madam, will you give me leave to add your charms to my catalogue?

JULIET.

O dear! Mr. Rust, I shall but disgrace it. Besides, Sir, when I marry, I am resolved to have my husband all to myself: Now for the possession of your heart I shall have too many competitors.

RUST.

How, Madam! were Prometheus alive, and would animate the Helen that stands in my hall, she should not cost me a sigh.

JULIET.

Aye, Sir, there lies my greatest misfortune. Had I only those who are alive to contend with, by assiduity, affection, cares, and caresses, I might secure my conquest; though that would be difficult; for I am convinc'd, were you, Mr. Rust, put up by Prestage to auction, the Apollo Belvidere would not draw a greater number of bidders.

RUST.

Would that were the case, Madam, so I might be thought a proper companion to the Venus de Medicis.

C

J U-

JULIET.

The flower of rhetoric, and pink of politeness. But my fears are not confined to the living; for every nation and age, even painters and statuaries, conspire against me. Nay, when the pantheon itself, the very goddesses rise up as my rivals, what chance has a mortal like me?—I shall certainly laugh in his face. [*Aside.*]

RUST.

She is a delicate subject.—Goddesses, Madam! zooks, had you been on Mount Ida when Paris decided the contest, the Cyprian queen had pleaded for the pippin in vain.

JULIET.

Extravagant gallantry.

RUST.

In you, Madam, are concenter'd all the beauties of the Heathen mythology: The open front of Diana, the lustre of Pallas's eyes —

JULIET.

Oh, Sir!

RUST.

The chromatic musick of Clio, the blooming graces of Hebe, the empercal port of queen Juno, with the delicate dimples of Venus.

J U-

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JULIET.

I see, Sir, antiquity has not engross'd all your attention: You are no novice in the nature of woman. Incense, I own, is grateful to most of my sex; but there are times when adoration may be dispens'd with.

RUST.

Ma'am!

JULIET.

I say, Sir, when we women willingly wave our rank in the skies, and wish to be treated as mortals.

RUST.

Doubtless, Madam: And are you wanting in materials for that? No, Madam; as in dignity you surpass the Heathen divinities, so in the charms of attraction you beggar the queens of the earth. The whole world, at different periods, has contributed its several beauties to form you.

JULIET.

The deuce it has! [*Aside.*]

RUST.

See there the ripe Asiatic perfection, join'd to the delicate softness of Europe. In you, Madam, I burn to possess Cleopatra's alluring glances, the Greek profile of queen Clytemnestra, the Roman nose of the empress Popæa.

JULIET.

With the majestic march of queen Bess. Mercy on me, what a wonderful creature am I!

RUST.

In short, Madam, not a feature you have, but recalls to my mind some trait in a medal or bust.

JULIET.

Indeed! Why, by your account, I must be an absolute olio, a perfect salamongundy of charms.

RUST.

Oh, Madam, how can you demean, as I may say, undervalue—

JULIET.

Value! there is the thing; and to tell you the truth, Mr. Rust, in that word value lies my greatest objection.

RUST.

I don't understand you.

JULIET.

Why then I will explain myself. It has been said, and I believe with some shadow of truth, that no man is a hero to his valet de chambre; now I am afraid when you and I grow a little more intimate, which I suppose must be the case if you proceed on your plan, you will be horribly dis-

disappointed in your high expectations, and soon discover this Juno, this Cleopatra, and princess Popæa, to be as arrant a mortal as madam your mother.

RUST.

Madam, I, I, I—

JULIET.

Your patience a moment. Being therefore desirous to preserve your devotion, I beg, for the future, you would please to adore at a distance.

RUST.

To Endymion, Madam, Luna once listened.

JULIET.

Aye, but he was another kind of a mortal; you may do very well as a votary; but for a husband --- mercy upon me!

RUST.

Madam, you are not in earnest, not serious!

JULIET.

Not serious! Why have you the impudence to think of marrying a goddess?

RUST.

I should hope—

JULIET.

And what should you hope? I find your devotion resembles that of the world:

When the power of sinning is over, and the sprightly first-runnings of life are rack'd off, you offer the vapid dregs to your deity. No, no; you may, if you please, turn monk in my service. One vow, I believe, you will observe better than most of them, Chastity.

RUST.

Permit me—

JULIET.

Or, if you must marry, take your Julia, your Portia, or Flora, your Fum-fam from China, or your Egyptian Ofiris. You have long paid your addresses to them.

RUST.

Marry! what, marble?

JULIET.

The properest wives in the world; you can't choose amiss; they will supply you with all that you want.

RUST.

Your uncle has, Madam, consented.

JULIET.

That is more than ever his niece will. Consented! and to what? To be swath'd to a mould'ring mummy; or be lock'd up, like your medals, to canker and rust in a cabinet! No, no; I was made for the world, and the world shall not be robb'd of its right.

BEVER.

BEVER.

Bravo, Juliet! Gad, she's a fine-spirited girl.

JULIET.

My profile, indeed! No, Sir, when I marry, I must have a man that will meet my full face.

RUST.

Might I be heard for a moment?

JULIET.

To what end? You say, you have Sir Thomas Lofty's consent; I tell you, you can never have mine. You may screen me from, or expose me to, my uncle's resentment; the choice is your own: If you lay the fault at my door, you will, doubtless, greatly distress me; but take the blame on yourself, and I shall own myself extremely oblig'd to you.

RUST.

How! confess myself in the fault?

JULIET.

Aye; for the best thing a man can do, when he finds he can't be belov'd, is to take care he is not heartily hated. There is no other alternative.

RUST.

Madam, I sha'n't break my word with Sir Thomas.

JULIET.

Nor I with myself. So there's an end
of our conference. Sir, your very obe-
dient.

RUST.

Madam, I, I, don't—that is, let me—
But no matter. Your servant. *[Exit.*

JULIET.

Ha, ha, ha!

Enter BEVER from behind.

BEVER.

Ha, ha, ha! Incomparable Juliet! How
the old dotard trembled and totter'd; he
could not have been more inflam'd, had he
been robb'd of his Otho.

JULIET.

Aye; was ever goddess so familiarly us'd?
In my conscience, I began to be afraid
that he would treat me as the Indians do
their dirty divinities; whenever they are
deaf to their prayers they beat and abuse
them.

BEVER.

But, after all, we are in an awkward
situation.

JULIET.

How so?

BEVER.

I have my fears.

J U-

JULIET.

So have not I.

BEVER.

Your uncle has resolv'd that you should be marry'd to Rust.

JULIET.

Aye, he may decree; but it is I that must execute.

BEVER.

But suppose he has given his word.

JULIET.

Why then let him recal it again.

BEVER.

But are you sure you shall have courage enough —

JULIET.

To say No? That requires much resolution, indeed.

BEVER.

Then I am at the height of my hopes.

JULIET.

Your hopes! Your hopes and your fears are ill-founded alike.

BEVER.

Why you are determined not to be his.

JULIET.

Well, and what then?

BEVER.

What then! why then you will be mine.

J U-

JULIET.

Indeed! and is that the natural consequence; whoever won't be his, must be yours. Is that the logic of Oxford?

BEVER.

Madam, I did flatter myself—

JULIET.

Then you did very wrong, indeed, Mr. Bever: You should ever guard against flattering yourself; for of all dangerous parasites, self is the worst.

BEVER.

I am astonish'd!

JULIET.

Astonish'd! you are mad, I believe! Why, I have not known you a month: It is true, my uncle says your father is his friend; your fortune, in time, will be easy; your figure is not remarkably faulty; and as to your understanding, passable enough for a young fellow who has not seen much of the world; but when one talks of a husband—Lord it's quite another sort of a—Ha, ha, ha! Poor Bever, how he stares! he stands like a statue!

BEVER.

Statue! Indeed, Madam, I am very near petrified.

J U-

JULIET.

Even then you will make as good a husband as Rust. But go, run, and join the assembly within: Be attentive to every word, motion, and look of my uncle's; be dumb when he speaks, admire all he says, laugh when he smirks, bow when he sneezes; in short, fawn, flatter, and cringe; don't be afraid of over-loading his stomach, for the Knight has a noble digestion, and you will find some there who will keep you in countenance.

BEVER.

I fly. So then, Juliet, your intention was only to try—

JULIET.

Don't plague me with impertinent questions; march; obey my directions. We must leave the issue to Chance; a greater friend to mankind than they are willing to own. Oh, if any thing new should occur, you may come into the drawing-room for further instructions.

[Exeunt severally.]

SCENE

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SCENE a Room in Sir THOMAS LOFTY'S House.

Sir THOMAS, RUST, PUFF, DACTYL,
and others, discovered sitting.

Sir THOMAS.

Nothing new to-day from Parnassus?

DACTYL.

Not that I hear.

Sir THOMAS.

Nothing critical, philosophical, or political?

PUFF.

Nothing.

Sir THOMAS.

Then in this difette, this dearth of invention, give me leave, Gentlemen, to distribute my stores. I have here in my hand a little smart, satyrical epigram; new, and prettily pointed: In short, a production that Martial himself would not have blush'd to acknowlege.

RUST.

Your own, Sir Thomas?

Sir THOMAS.

O fie! no; sent me this morning, anonymous.

DACTYL.

Pray, Sir Thomas, let us have it.

ALL.

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ALL.

By all means ; by all means.

Sir THOMAS.

To PHILLIS.

Think'st thou, fond Phillis, Strephon told thee true,
Angels are painted fair, to look like you :
Another story all the town will tell ;
Phillis paints fair — to look like an angel.

ALL.

Fine ! fine ! very fine !

DACTYL.

Such an ease and simplicity !

PUFF.

The turn so unexpected and quick.

RUST.

The satyr so poignant.

Sir THOMAS.

Yes ; I think it possesses, in an eminent degree, the three great epigrammatical requisites ; brevity, familiarity, and severity.

Phillis paints fair — to look like an angel.

DACTYL.

Happy ! Is the Phillis, the subject, a secret ?

Sir THOMAS.

Oh, dear me ! nothing personal ; no ; an impromptu ; a mere *jeu d'esprit*.

PUFF.

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PUFF.

Then, Sir Thomas, the secret is out ; it is your own.

DACTYL.

That was obvious enough.

PUFF.

Who is there else could have wrote it ?

RUST.

True, true.

Sir THOMAS.

The name of the Author is needless. So it is an acquisition to the republic of letters, any Gentleman may claim the merit that will.

PUFF.

What a noble contempt !

DACTYL.

What greatness of mind !

RUST.

Scipio and Lælius were the Roman Loftys. Why, I dare believe Sir Thomas has been the making of half the Authors in town : He is, as I may say, the great manufacturer ; the other Poets are but Pedlars, that live by retailing his wares.

ALL.

Ha, ha, ha ! well observ'd, Mr. Rust.

Sir THOMAS.

Ha, ha, ha ! *Molle atque facetum.* Why, to pursue the metaphor, if Sir Thomas Lofty was

THE PATRON. 41

was to call in his poetical debts, I believe there would be a good many bankrupts in the Muse's Gazette.

ALL.

Ha, ha, ha!

Sir THOMAS.

But, *a-propos*, Gentlemen; with regard to the eclipse: You found my calculation exact?

DACTYL.

To a digit.

Sir THOMAS.

Total darkness, indeed! and birds going to roost! Those Philomaths, those Almanack-makers, are the most ignorant rascals—

PUFF.

It is amazing where Sir Thomas Lofty stores all his knowlege.

DACTYL.

It is wonderful how the mind of man can contain it.

Sir THOMAS.

Why, to tell you the truth, that circumstance has a good deal engag'd my attention; and I believe you will admit my method of solving the phenomenon philosophical and ingenious enough.

PUFF.

Without question.

ALL.

ALL.

Doubtless.

SIR THOMAS.

I suppose, Gentlemen, my memory, or mind, to be a chest of drawers, a kind of bureau; where, in separate cellules, my different knowlege on different subjects is stor'd.

RUST.

A prodigious discovery!

ALL.

Amazing!

SIR THOMAS.

To this cabinet, volition, or will, has a key; so when an arduous subject occurs, I unlock my bureau, pull out the particular drawer, and am supplied with what I want in an instant.

DACTYL.

A Malbranch!

PUFF.

A Boyle!

ALL.

A Locke!

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT.

Mr. Bever.

[*Exit.*

SIR THOMAS.

A young Gentleman from Oxford, recommended to my care by his father. The
university

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university has given him a good solid Doric foundation ; and when he has receiv'd from you a few Tuscan touches, the Ionic and Corinthian graces, I make no doubt but he will prove a composite pillar to the republic of letters. [*Enter BEVER.*] This, Sir, is the school from whence so many capital masters have issued ; the river that enriches the regions of science.

D A C T Y L.

Of which river, Sir Thomas, you are the source ; here we quaff : *Et purpureo bibimus ore nectar.*

SIR T H O M A S.

Purpureo! Delicate, indeed ! Mr. Dactyl. Do you hear, Mr. Bever ? *Bibimus ore nectar.* You, young Gentleman, must be instructed to quote ; nothing gives a period more spirit than a happy Latin quotation, nor has indeed a finer effect at the head of an essay. Poor Dick Steel ! I have oblig'd him with many a motto for his fugitive pieces.

P U F F.

Aye, and with the contents too, or Sir Richard is foully bely'd.

Enter S E R V A N T.

S E R V A N T.

Sir Roger Dowlas.

D

Sir

Sir THOMAS.

Pray desire him to enter. [*Exit* Servant.]
Sir Roger, Gentlemen, is a considerable
East-India proprietor; and seems desirous
of collecting, from this learned assembly,
some rhetorical flowers, which he hopes to
strew, with honour to himself, and advan-
tage to the Company, at Merchant-Taylors-
Hall. [*Enter* Sir ROGER DOWLAS.] Sir
Roger, be seated. This Gentleman has, in
common with the greatest orator the world
ever saw, a small natural infirmity; he stut-
ters a little: But I have prescrib'd the same
remedy that Demosthenes used, and don't
despair of a radical cure. Well, Sir, have
you digested those general rules?

Sir ROGER.

Pr--ett--y well, I am obli--g'd to you,
Sir Thomas.

Sir THOMAS.

Have you been regular in taking your
tincture of sage, to give you confidence for
speaking in public?

Sir ROGER.

Y--es, Sir Thomas.

Sir THOMAS.

Did you open at the last General Court?

Sir ROGER.

I attem--p--ted fo--ur or fi--ve times.

Sir

Sir THOMAS.

What hinder'd your progress?

Sir ROGER.

The pe--b--bles.

Sir THOMAS.

Oh, the pebbles in his mouth. But they are only put in to practise in private; you should take them out when you are addressing the public.

Sir ROGER.

Yes; I will, for the fu--ture.

Sir THOMAS.

Well, Mr. Rust, you had a *tête-à-tête* with my niece. A-propos, Mr. Bever, here offers a fine occasion for you; we shall take the liberty to trouble your Muse on their nuptials: O Love! O Hymen! here prune thy purple wings; trim thy bright torch. Hey, Mr. Bever?

BEVER.

My talents are at Sir Thomas Lofty's direction; tho' I must despair of producing any performance worthy the attention of so compleat a judge of the elegant arts.

Sir THOMAS.

Too modest, good Mr. Bever. Well, Mr. Rust, any new acquisition, since our last meeting, to your matchless collection?

R U S T.

Why, Sir Thomas, I have both lost and gain'd since I saw you.

Sir T H O M A S.

Lost! I am sorry for that.

R U S T.

The curious sarcophagus, that was sent me from Naples, by Signor Belloni ---

Sir T H O M A S.

You mean the urn that was supposed to contain the dust of Agrippa!

R U S T.

Supposed! no doubt but it did!

Sir T H O M A S.

I hope no sinister accident to that inestimable relic of Rome.

R U S T.

It's gone.

Sir T H O M A S.

Gone! oh, illiberal! What, stolen, I suppose, by some Connoisseur?

R U S T.

Worse, worse! a prey, a martyr to ignorance: A housemaid that I hir'd last week, mistook it for a broken green chamber-pot, and sent it away in the dust-cart.

Sir T H O M A S.

She merits impaling. Oh, the Hun!

D A C-



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DACTYL.

The Vandal !

ALL.

The Visigoth !

RUST.

But I have this day acquir'd a treasure that
will in some measure make me amends.

Sir THOMAS.

Indeed ! what can that be ?

PUFF.

That must be something curious, indeed.

RUST.

It has cost me infinite trouble to get it.

DACTYL.

Great rarities are not had without pains.

RUST.

It is three months ago since I got the first
scent of it, and I have been ever since on the
hunt ; but all to no purpose.

Sir THOMAS.

I am quite upon thorns till I see it.

RUST.

And yesterday, when I had given it over,
when all my hopes were grown desperate, it
fell into my hands, by the most unexpected
and wonderful accident.

Sir THOMAS.

Quod optanti divum promittere nemo
Auderet, volvenda dies en attulit ultro.

Mr. Bever, you remark my quotation ?

D 3

BEVER.

BEVER.

Most happy. Oh, Sir, nothing you say can be lost.

RUST.

I have brought it here in my pocket; I am no churl; I love to pleasure my friends.

Sir THOMAS.

You are, Mr. Rust, extremely obliging.

ALL.

Very kind, very obliging, indeed.

RUST.

It was not much hurt by the fire.

Sir THOMAS.

Very fortunate.

RUST.

The edges are foil'd by the link; but many of the letters are exceedingly legible.

Sir ROGER.

A li--ttle roo--m, if you p--lease.

RUST.

Here it is; the precious remains of the very North-Briton that was burnt at the Royal-Exchange.

Sir THOMAS.

Number Forty-five?

RUST.

The same.

BEVER.

You are a lucky man, Mr. Rust,

RUST,

RUST.

I think so. But, Gentlemen, I hope I need not give you a caution: Hush—silence—no words on this matter.

DACTYL.

You may depend upon us.

RUST.

For as the paper has not suffer'd the law, I don't know whether they may not seize it again.

Sir THOMAS.

With us you are safe, Mr. Rust. Well, young Gentleman, you see we cultivate all branches of science.

BEVER.

Amazing, indeed! But when we consider you, Sir Thomas, as the directing, the ruling planet, our wonder subsides in an instant. Science first saw the day with Socrates in the Attic portico; her early years were spent with Tully, in the Tusculan shade; but her ripe, maturer hours, she enjoys with Sir Thomas Lofty, near Cavendish-square.

Sir THOMAS.

The most classical compliment I ever receiv'd. Gentlemen, a philosophical repast attends your acceptance within. Sir Roger, you'll lead the way. [*Exeunt all but Sir Thomas and Bever.*] Mr. Bever, may I beg your ear for a moment? Mr. Bever, the

friendship I have for your father, secured you, at first, a gracious reception from me; but what I then paid to an old obligation, is now, Sir, due to your own particular merit.

BEVER.

I am happy, Sir Thomas, if—

Sir THOMAS.

Your patience. There is in you, Mr. Bever, a fire of imagination, a quickness of apprehension, a solidity of judgment, join'd to a depth of discretion, that I never yet met with in any subject at your time of life.

BEVER.

I hope I shall never forfeit—

Sir THOMAS.

I am sure you never will; and to give you a convincing proof that I think so, I am now going to trust you with the most important secret of my whole life.

BEVER.

Your confidence does me great honour.

Sir THOMAS.

But this must be on a certain condition.

BEVER.

Name it.

Sir THOMAS.

That you give me your solemn promise to comply with one request I shall make you.

BEVER.

There is nothing Sir Thomas Lofty can ask, that I shall not chearfully grant.

Sir

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Sir THOMAS.

Nay, in fact, it will be serving yourself.

BEVER.

I want no such inducement.

Sir THOMAS.

Enough. But we can't be too private.
[*Shuts the door.*] Sit you down. Your Christian name, I think is—

BEVER.

Richard.

Sir THOMAS.

True; the same as your father's: Come, let us be familiar. It is, I think, dear Dick, acknowleg'd, that the English have reach'd the highest pitch of perfection in every department of writing but one—the dramatic.

BEVER.

Why, the French critics are a little severe.

Sir THOMAS.

And with reason. Now, to rescue our credit, and at the same time give my country a model, [*shews a manuscript,*] see here.

BEVER.

A play?

Sir THOMAS.

A *chef d'œuvre*.

BEVER.

Your own?

Sir THOMAS.

Speak lower. I am the author.

BEVER.

BEVER.

Nay, then there can be no doubt of its merit.

Sir THOMAS.

I think not. You will be charm'd with the subject.

BEVER.

What is it, Sir Thomas?

Sir THOMAS.

I shall surprize you. The story of Robinson Crusoe. Are not you struck?

BEVER.

Most prodigiously.

Sir THOMAS.

Yes; I knew the very title would hit you. You will find the whole fable is finely conducted, and the character of Friday, *qualis ab incepto*, nobly supported throughout.

BEVER.

A pretty difficult task.

Sir THOMAS.

True; that was not a bow for a boy. The piece has long been in rehearsal at Drury-lane playhouse, and this night is to make its appearance.

BEVER.

To-night?

Sir THOMAS.

This night.

BEVER.

I will attend, and engage all my friends to support it.

Sir

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Sir THOMAS.

That is not my purpose; the piece will want no such assistance.

BEVER.

I beg pardon.

Sir THOMAS.

The manager of that house (who, you know, is a writer himself) finding all the anonymous things he produc'd (indeed some of them wretched enough, and very unworthy of him), plac'd to his account by the public, is determin'd to exhibit no more without knowing the name of the author.

BEVER.

A reasonable caution.

Sir THOMAS.

Now, upon my promise (for I appear to patronize the play) to announce the author before the curtain draws up, Robinson Crusoe is advertis'd for this evening.

BEVER.

Oh, then you will acknowledge the piece to be yours?

Sir THOMAS.

No,

BEVER.

How then?

Sir THOMAS.

My design is to give it to you.

BEVER.

To me!

Sir

Sir THOMAS.

To you.

BEVER.

What, me the author of Robinson Crusoe!

Sir THOMAS.

Aye.

BEVER.

Lord, Sir Thomas, it will never gain credit: So compleat a production the work of a stripling! Besides, Sir, as the merit is yours, why rob yourself of the glory?

Sir THOMAS.

I am entirely indifferent to that.

BEVER.

Then why take the trouble?

Sir THOMAS.

My fondness for letters, and love of my country. Besides, dear Dick, though the *pauci & selecti*, the chosen few, know the full value of a performance like this, yet the ignorant, the profane (by much the majority) will be apt to think it an occupation ill suited to my time of life.

BEVER.

Their censure is praise.

Sir THOMAS.

Doubtless. But indeed my principal motive is my friendship for you. You are now a candidate for literary honours, and I am de-

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determin'd to fix your fame on an immovable basis.

BEVER.

You are most excessively kind ; but there is something so disingenuous in stealing reputation from another man.

Sir THOMAS.

Idle punctilio !

BEVER.

It puts me so in mind of the daw in the fable.

Sir THOMAS.

Come, come, dear Dick, I won't suffer your modesty to murder your fame. But the company will suspect something ; we will join them, and proclaim you the author. There, keep the copy ; to you I consign it for ever ; it shall be a secret to latest posterity. You will be smother'd with praise by our friends ; they shall all in their bark to the playhouse ; and there,

Attendant fail,
Pursue the triumph, and partake the gale.

[*Exeunt.*]

END of the SECOND ACT.

ACT

A C T III. *Scene continues.*

Enter BEVER, reading.

SO ends the first Act. Come, now for the second. "Act the second, shewing," — the coxcomb has prefac'd every act with an argument too, in humble imitation, I warrant, of Mons. Diderot — "Shewing the fatal effects of disobedience to parents;" with, I suppose, the diverting scene of a gibbet; an entertaining subject for comedy. And the blockhead is as prolix; every scene as long as a homily. Let's see; how does this end? "Exit Crusoe, and enter some savages, dancing a saraband." There's no bearing this abominable trash. [*Enter JULIET.*] So, Madam; thanks to your advice and direction, I am got into a fine situation.

JULIET.

What is the matter now, Mr. Bever?

BEVER.

The Robinson Crusoe.

JULIET.

Oh, the play that is to be acted to-night. How secret you were? Who in the world would have guess'd you was the author?

BEVER.

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BEVER.

Me, Madam!

JULIET.

Your title is odd; but to a genius every subject is good.

BEVER.

You are inclin'd to be pleasant.

JULIET.

Within they have been all prodigious loud in the praise of your piece; but I think my uncle rather more eager than any.

BEVER.

He has reason; for fatherly fondness goes far.

JULIET.

I don't understand you.

BEVER.

You don't!

JULIET.

No.

BEVER.

Nay, Juliet, this is too much; you know it is none of my play.

JULIET.

Whose then?

BEVER.

Your uncle's.

JULIET.

My uncle's! Then how, in the name of wonder, came you to adopt it?

BEVER.

At his earnest request. I may be a fool; but member, Madam, you are the cause.

J U -

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JULIET.

This is strange; but I can't conceive what his motive could be.

BEVER.

His motive is obvious enough; to screen himself from the infamy of being the Author.

JULIET.

What, is it bad, then?

BEVER.

Bad! most infernal!

JULIET.

And you have consented to own it?

BEVER.

Why, what could I do? He in a manner compell'd me

JULIET.

I am extremely glad of it.

BEVER.

Glad of it! Why I tell you 'tis the most dull, tedious, melancholy—

JULIET.

So much the better.

BEVER.

The most flat piece of frippery that ever Grubstreet produc'd.

JULIET.

So much the better.

BEVER.

It will be damn'd before the third act.

JULIET.

So much the better.

BEVER.

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BEVER.

And I shall be hooted and pointed at wherever I go.

JULIET.

So much the better.

BEVER.

So much the better! Zounds! so, I suppose, you would say if I was going to be hang'd. Do you call this a mark of your friendship?

JULIET.

Ah, Bever, Bever! you are a miserable politician: Do you know now that this is the luckiest incident that ever occurred?

BEVER.

Indeed!

JULIET.

It could not have been better laid, had we plann'd it ourselves.

BEVER.

You will pardon my want of conception; but these are riddles—

JULIET.

That at present I have not time to explain. But what makes you loit'ring here? Past six o'clock, as I live! Why, your play is begun; run, run to the house: Was ever Author so little anxious for the fate of his piece.

BEVER.

My piece!

JULIET.

Sir Thomas! I know by his walk. Fly; and pray all the way for the fall of your play: And,

E

de

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do you hear, if you find the audience too indulgent, inclin'd to be milky, rather than fail, squeeze in a little acid yourself. Oh, Mr. Bever, at your return let me see you, before you go to my uncle; that is, if you have the good luck to be damn'd.

BEVER.

You need not doubt that. [Exit.

Enter Sir THOMAS LOFTY.

Sir THOMAS.

So, Juliet; was not that Mr. Bever?

JULIET.

Yes, Sir.

Sir THOMAS.

He is rather tardy; by this time his cause is come on. And how is the young Gentleman affected? for this is a trying occasion.

JULIET.

He seems pretty certain, Sir.

Sir THOMAS.

Indeed, I think he has very little reason for fear. I confess I admire the piece; and feel as much for its fate as if the work was my own.

JULIET.

That I most sincerely believe. I wonder, Sir, you did not choose to be present.

Sir THOMAS.

Better not. My affections are strong, Juliet, and my nerves but tenderly strung; however, intelligent people are planted, who will bring me, every Act, a faithful account of the process.

JU-

THE PATRON. 61

JULIET.

That will answer your purpose as well.

Sir THOMAS.

Indeed, I am passionately fond of the arts, and therefore can't help — Did not somebody knock? No. My good girl, will you step, and take care that when any body comes, the servants may not be out of the way. [*Exit JULIET.*] Five and thirty minutes past six; by this time the first act must be over: John will be presently here. I think it can't fail; yet there is so much whim and caprice in the public opinion, that—This young man is unknown; they'll give him no credit. I had better have own'd it myself: Reputation goes a great way in these matters; people are afraid to find fault; they are cautious in censuring the works of a man who—hush! that's he: no; 'tis only the shutters. After all, I think I have chose the best way; for if it succeeds to the degree I expect, it will be easy to circulate the real name of the author; if it falls, I am conceal'd; my fame suffers—no—There he is. [*Loud knocking.*] I can't conceive what kept him so long. [*Enter JOHN.*] So John; well; and—but you have been a monstrous while.

JOHN.

Sir, I was wedg'd so close in the pit, that I could scarcely get out.

Sir THOMAS.

The house was full, then?

E 2

JOHN

JOHN.

As an egg, Sir.

Sir THOMAS.

That's right. Well, John, and did matters go swimmingly? hey?

JOHN.

Exceedingly well, Sir,

Sir THOMAS.

Exceedingly well. I don't doubt it. What, vast clapping and roars of applause, I suppose.

JOHN.

Very well, Sir.

Sir THOMAS.

Very well, Sir! You are damn'd coftive, I think. But did not the pit and boxes thunder again?

JOHN.

I can't say there was over much thunder.

Sir THOMAS.

No! Oh, attentive, I reckon. Aye, attention; that is the true, solid, substantial applause. All else may be purchas'd; hands move as they are bid: But when the audience is hush'd, still, afraid of losing a word, then—

JOHN.

Yes, they were very quiet, indeed, Sir.

Sir THOMAS.

I like them the better, John; a strong mark of their great sensibility. Did you see Robin?

JOHN.

Yes, Sir; he'll be here in a trice; I left him list'ning at the back of the boxes, and charg'd him to make all the haste home that he could.

Sir

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Sir THOMAS.

That's right, John; very well; your account pleases me much, honest John. [*Exit JOHN.*] No, I did not expect the first act would produce any prodigious effect. And, after all, the first act is but a mere introduction; just opens the business, the plot, and gives a little insight into the characters; so that if you but engage and interest the house, it is as much as the best writer can flatter—[*Knocking without.*] Gadso! what, Robin already! why the fellow has the feet of a Mercury. [*Enter ROBIN.*] Well, Robin, and what news do you bring?

ROBIN.

Sir, I, I, I—

Sir THOMAS.

Stop, Robin, and recover your breath. Now, Robin.

ROBIN.

There has been a woundy uproar below.

Sir THOMAS.

An uproar! what, at the playhouse?

ROBIN.

Aye.

Sir THOMAS.

At what?

ROBIN.

I don't know: Belike at the words the play-folk were talking.

Sir THOMAS.

At the players! how can that be? Oh, now I begin to conceive. Poor fellow, he knows but

E 3

little

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little of plays: What, Robin, I suppose, hallooing, and clapping, and knocking of sticks,

ROBIN.

Hallooing! aye, and hooting too.

Sir THOMAS.

And hooting!

ROBIN.

Aye, and hissing to boot.

Sir THOMAS.

Hissing! you must be mistaken.

ROBIN.

By the mass, but I am not.

Sir THOMAS.

Impossible! Oh, most likely some drunken disorderly fellows, that were disturbing the house, and interrupting the play; too common a case; the people were right: they deserv'd a rebuke. Did not you hear them cry, Out, out, out!

ROBIN.

Noa; that was not the cry; 'twas, Off, off, off!

Sir THOMAS.

That was a whimsical noise. Zounds! that must be the players. Did you observe nothing else?

ROBIN.

Belike the quarrel first began between the gentry and a black-a-moor man.

Sir THOMAS.

With Friday! The public taste is debauch'd; honest nature is too plain and simple for their vitiated palates! [*Enter JULIET.*] Juliet, Robin

THE PATRON. 65

bin brings me the strangest account; some little disturbance; but I suppose it was soon settled again. Oh, but here comes Mr. Staytape, my taylor; he is a rational being; we shall be able to make something of him. [*Enter STAYTAPE.*] So, Staytape; what, is the third act over already?

STAYTAPE.

Over, Sir! no; nor never will be.

Sir THOMAS.

What do you mean?

STAYTAPE.

Cut short.

Sir THOMAS.

I don't comprehend you.

STAYTAPE.

Why, Sir, the poet has made a mistake in measuring the taste of the town: the goods, it seems, did not fit; so they return'd them upon the gentleman's hands.

Sir THOMAS.

Rot your affectation and quaintness, you puppy! speak plain.

STAYTAPE.

Why then, Sir, Robinson Crusoe is dead.

Sir THOMAS.

Dead!

STAYTAPE.

Aye; and what is worse, will never rise any more. You will soon have all the particulars; for there were four or five of your friends close at my heels.

Sir THOMAS.

Staytape, Juliet, run and stop them; say I am gone out; I am sick; I am engag'd: But whatever you do, be sure you don't let Bever come in. Secure of the victory, I invited them to the celebr—

STAYTAPE.

Sir, they are here.

Sir THOMAS.

Confound —

Enter PUFF, DACTYL, and RUST.

RUST.

Aye, truly, Mr. Puff, this is but a bitter beginning; then the young man must turn himself to some other trade.

PUFF.

Servant, Sir Thomas; I suppose you have heard the news of —

Sir THOMAS.

Yes, yes; I have been told it before.

DACTYL.

I confess I did not suspect it; but there is no knowing what effect these things will have, till they come on the stage.

RUST.

For my part, I don't know much of these matters; but a couple of gentlemen near me, who seem'd sagacious enough too, declar'd, that it was the vilest stuff they ever had heard, and wonder'd the players would act it.

D A C-

THE PATRON. 67

DACTYL.

Yes; I don't remember to have seen a more general dislike.

PUFF.

I was thinking to ask you, Sir Thomas, for your interest with Mr. Bever, about buying the copy; but now no mortal would read it. Lord, Sir, it would not pay for paper and printing.

RUST.

I remember Kennet, in his Roman Antiquities, mentions a Play of Terence's, Mr. Daetyl, that was terribly treated; but that he attributes to the peoples' fondness for certain funambuli, or rope-dancers; but I have not lately heard of any famous tumblers in town; Sir Thomas, have you?

Sir THOMAS.

How should I? do you suppose I trouble my head about tumblers?

RUST.

Nay, I did not —

BEVER, *speaking without.*

Not to be spoke with! Don't tell me, Sir; he must, he shall.

Sir THOMAS.

Mr. Bever's voice. If he is admitted in his present disposition, the whole secret will certainly out. Gentlemen, some affairs of a most interesting nature makes it impossible for me to have the honour of your company to-night; therefore I beg you would be so good as to---

RUST.

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RUST.

Affairs! no bad news? I hope Miss Julè is well.

Sir THOMAS.

Very well; but I am most exceedingly ---

RUST.

I shall only just stay to see Mr. Bever: Poor lad! he will be most horribly down in the mouth; a little comfort won't come amiss.

Sir THOMAS.

Mr. Bever, Sir! you won't see him here.

RUST.

Not here! why I thought I heard his voice but just now.

Sir THOMAS.

You are mistaken, Mr. Rust; but ---

RUST.

May be so; then we will go. Sir Thomas, my compliments of condolance, if you please, to the Poet.

Sir THOMAS.

Aye, aye.

DACTYL.

And mine; for I suppose we sha'n't see him soon.

PUFF.

Poor Gentleman! I warrant he won't shew his head for these fix months.

RUST.

Aye, aye; indeed I am very sorry for him; so tell him, Sir.

DACTYL and PUFF.

So are we.

RUST.

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RUST.

Sir Thomas, your servant. Come, Gentlemen. By all this confusion in Sir Thomas, there must be something more in the wind than I know; but I will watch, I am resolv'd.

[*Exeunt.*

BEVER, *without.*

Rascals, stand by! I must, I will see him.

Enter BEVER.

So, Sir; this is delicate treatment, after all I have suffer'd.

Sir THOMAS.

Mr. Bever, I hope you don't---that is---

BEVER.

Well, Sir Thomas Lofty, what think you now of your Robinson Crusoe? a pretty performance!

Sir THOMAS.

Think, Mr. Bever! I think the public are blockheads; a tasteless, stupid, ignorant tribe; and a man of genius deserves to be damn'd who writes any thing for them. But courage, dear Dick! the principals will give you what the people refuse; the closet will do you that justice the stage has deny'd: Print your Play.

BEVER.

My Play! zounds, Sir, 'tis your own.

Sir THOMAS.

Speak lower, dear Dick; be moderate, my good, dear lad!

BEVER.

Oh, Sir Thomas, you may be easy enough;
you

you are safe and secure, remov'd far from that precipice that has dash'd me to-pieces.

Sir THOMAS.

Dear Dick, don't believe it will hurt you : The Critics, the real judges, will discover in that piece such excellent talents ---

BEVER.

No, Sir Thomas, no. I shall neither flatter you, nor myself ; I have acquir'd a right to speak what I think. Your Play, Sir, is a wretched performance ; and in this opinion all mankind are united.

Sir THOMAS.

May be not.

BEVER.

If your piece had been greatly receiv'd, I would have declared Sir Thomas Lofty the author ; if coldly, I would have own'd it myself ; but such disgraceful, such contemptible treatment !—I own the burthen is too heavy for me ; so, Sir, you must bear it yourself.

Sir THOMAS.

Me, dear Dick ! what, to become ridiculous in the decline of my life ; to destroy, in one hour, the fame that forty years has been building ! that was the prop, the support of my age ! Can you be cruel enough to desire it ?

BEVER.

Zounds ! Sir, and why must I be your crutch ? Would you have me become a voluntary victim ? No, Sir, this cause does not merit a martyrdom.

Sir

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Sir THOMAS.

I own myself greatly oblig'd ; but persevere, dear Dick, persevere ; you have time to recover your fame ; I beg it with tears in my eyes. Another Play will —

BEVER.

No, Sir Thomas ; I have done with the stage ; the Muses and I meet no more.

Sir THOMAS.

Nay, there are various roads open in life.

BEVER.

Not one, where your piece won't pursue me : If I go to the Bar, the ghost of this curs'd comedy will follow, and hunt me in Westminster-hall. Nay, when I die, it will stick to my Memory, and I shall be handed down to posterity with the author of *Love in a Hollow Tree*.

Sir THOMAS.

Then marry : You are a pretty smart figure ; and your poetical talents ---

BEVER.

And what Fair would admit of my suit, or family wish to receive me ? Make the case your own, Sir Thomas ; would you ?

Sir THOMAS.

With infinite pleasure.

BEVER.

Then give me your niece ; her hand shall seal up my lips.

Sir THOMAS.

What, Juliet ? Willingly. But are you serious ? Do you really admire the Girl ?

BEVER.

BEVER.

Beyond what words can express. It was by her advice I consented to father your Play.

SIR THOMAS.

What, is Juliet appriz'd? Here, Robin, John, run and call my niece hither this moment. That giddy baggage will blab all in an instant.

BEVER.

You are mistaken; she is wiser than you are aware of.

Enter JULIET.

SIR THOMAS.

Oh, Juliet! you know what has happen'd?

JULIET.

I do, Sir.

SIR THOMAS.

Have you reveal'd this unfortunate secret?

JULIET.

To no mortal, Sir Thomas.

SIR THOMAS.

Come, give me your hand. Mr. Bever, child, for my sake, has renounced the Stage, and the whole Republic of Letters; in return, I owe him your hand.

JULIET.

My hand! what, to a Poet hooted, hissed, and exploded! You must pardon me, Sir.

SIR THOMAS.

Juliet, a trifle; the most they can say of him is, that he is a little wanting in wit; and he has so many brother-writers to keep him in coun-

countenance, that now-a-days that is no reflection at all.

J U L I E T.

Then, Sir, your engagement to Mr. Rust.

S I R T H O M A S.

I have found out the rascal; he has been more impertinently severe on my play, than all the rest put together; so that I am determined he shall be none of the man.

Enter R U S T.

R U S T.

Are you so, Sir? what, then, I am to be sacrific'd, in order to preserve the secret that you are a blockhead: But you are out in your politics; before night it shall be known in all the Coffee-houses in town.

S I R T H O M A S.

For Heaven's sake, Mr. Rust!

R U S T.

And to-morrow I will paragraph you in every news-paper; you shall no longer impose on the world; I will unmask you; the lion's skin shall hide you no longer.

S I R T H O M A S.

Juliet! Mr. Bever! what can I do?

B E V E R.

Sir Thomas, let me manage this matter. Harkee, old Gentleman, a word in your ear; you remember what you have in your pocket?

R U S T.

Hey! how! what?

B E V E R.

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BEVER.

The curiosity that has cost you so much pains.

RUST.

What, my Æneas ! my precious relict of Troy !

BEVER.

You must give up that, or the Lady.

JULIET.

How, Mr. Bever ?

BEVER.

Never fear ; I am sure of my man.

RUST.

Let me consider : As to the girl, girls are plenty enough ; I can marry whenever I will : But my paper, my phoenix, that springs fresh from the flames, that can never be match'd. — Take her.

BEVER.

And, as you love your own secret, be careful of ours.

RUST.

I am dumb.

Sir THOMAS.

Now, Juliet.

JULIET.

You join me, Sir, to an unfortunate Bard ; but, to procure your peace —

Sir THOMAS.

You oblige me for ever. Now the secret dies with us four. My fault. I owe him much.

Be it your care to shew it ;

And bless the Man, tho' I have damn'd the Poet.

FINIS.

THE
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IN THREE ACTS.

As it is Performed at the
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Juv. Sat. III.

*Criminibus debent hortos, prætoria, mensas,
Argentum vetus, & stantem extra pocula Caprum.*

Ibid. Sat. I.

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Mrs. Lister,
Dolly,
Lenny,

Mrs. Chisley,
Mr. Butler,
Miss Mendenhall,
Mr. O'Connell.

T H B
COMMISSARY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Mrs. MECHLIN's House.

(Loud knocking at the Door.)

Enter JENNY.

RAP, rap, rap, up-stairs and down, from morning to night; if this same Commissary stays much longer amongst us, my mistress must e'en hire a porter. Who's there?

SIMON without.

Sim. Is Mrs. Mechlin at home?

Jen. No. *(opens the Door.)* Oh, what is it you, Simon?

Enter SIMON.

Sim. At your service, sweet Mrs. Jane.

Jen. Why you knock with authority; and what are your commands, Master Simon?

Sim. I come, Madam, to receive those of your mistress. What, Jenny, has she any great affair on the anvil? Her summons is most exceedingly pressing; and you need not be told, Child, that a man of my consequence does not trouble himself about trifles.

B

Jen.

THE COMMISSARY.

Jen. Oh, Sir, I know very well you principal actors don't perform every night.

Sim. Mighty well, Ma'am, but notwithstanding your ironical sneer, it is not every man that will do for your mistress; her agents must have genius and parts: I don't suppose, in the whole Bills of Mortality, there is so general and extensive a dealer as my friend Mrs. Mechlin.

Jen. Why, to be sure, we have plenty of customers; and for various kinds of commodities it would be pretty difficult I fancy to——

Sim. Commodities! Your humble servant, sweet Mrs. Jane; Yes, yes, you have various kinds of commodities, indeed.

Jen. Mr. Simon, I don't understand you; I suppose it is no secret in what sort of goods our dealing consists.

Sim. No, no, they are pretty well known.

Jen. And to be sure, though now and then, to oblige a customer, my mistress does condescend to smuggle a little——

Sim. Keep it up, Mrs. Jane.

Jen. Yet there are no people in the Liberty of Westminster that live in more credit than we do.

Sim. Bravo.

Jen. The very best of quality are not ashamed to visit my mistress.

Sim. They have reason.

Jen. Respected by the neighbours.

Sim. I know it.

Jen. Punctual in her payments.

Sim. To a moment.

Jen. Regular hours.

Sim. Doubtless.

Jen. Never misses the sarvant on Sundays.

Sim. I

THE COMMISSARY. 3

Sim. I own it.

Jen. Not an oath comes out of her mouth, unless, now and then, when the poor gentlewoman happens to be overtaken in liquor.

Sim. Granted.

Jen. Not at all given to lying, but like other tradesfolks, in the way of her business.

Sim. Very well.

Jen. Very well! then pray, Sir, what wou'd you insinuate? Look you, Mr. Simon, don't go to cast reflections upon us; don't think to blast the reputation of our——

Sim. Hark ye, Jenny, are you serious?

Jen. Serious! Ay, marry am I.

Sim. The devil you are!

Jen. Upon my word, Mr. Simon, you shou'd not give your tongue such a licence; let me tell you, these airs don't become you at all.

Sim. Hey-day! why where the deuce have I got, sure I have mistaken the house; is not this Mrs. Mechlin's?

Jen. That's pretty well known.

Sim. The commodious, convenient Mrs. Mechlin, at the sign of the Star, in the parish of St. Paul's?

Jen. Bravo.

Sim. That commercial caterpillar?

Jen. I know it.

Sim. That murderer of manufactures?

Jen. Doubtless.

Sim. That walking warehouse?

Jen. Granted.

Sim. That carries about a greater cargo of contraband goods under her petticoats than a Calais cutter?

Jen. Very well.

THE COMMISSARY.

Sim. That engrosser and seducer of virgins?

Jen. Keep it up, master Simon.

Sim. That forestaller of Bagnios?

Jen. Incomparable fine.

Sim. That canting, couzening, money-lending, match-making, pawnbroking—[*Loud knocking.*]

Jen. Mighty well, Sir: here comes my mistress, she shall thank you for the pretty picture you have been pleased to draw.

Sim. Nay, but dear Jenny—

Jen. She shall be told how highly she stands in your favour.

Sim. But my sweet girl— [Knock again.]

Jen. Let me go, Mr. Simon, don't you hear?

Sim. And can you have the heart to ruin me at once!

Jen. Hands off.

Sim. A peace, a peace, my dear Mrs. Jane, and dictate the articles.

Enter Mrs. MECHLIN, followed by a hackney coachman, with several bundles, in a capuchin, a bonnet, and her cloaths pinned up.

Mrs. Mech. So, hussy, what must I stay all day in the streets? who have we here! the devil's in the wenches. I think—one of your fellows I suppose—Oh, is it you! how fares it, Simon?

Jen. Madam, you should not have waited a minute, but Mr. Simon—

Sim. Hush, hush! you barbarous jade—

Jen. Knowing your knock, and eager to open the door, flew up stairs, fell over the landing-place, and quite barr'd up the way.

Sim.

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Sim. Yes, and I am afraid I have put out my ankle. Thanks, Jenny ; you shall be no loser, you slut.

Mrs. Mech. Poor Simon.—Oh, Lord have mercy upon me, what a round have I taken ! — Is the wench petrified ; why don't you reach me a chair, don't you see I'm tired to death ?

Jen. Indeed, ma'am, you'll kill yourself.

Sim. Upon my word, ma'am Mechlin, you shou'd take a little care of yourself ; indeed you labour too hard.

Mrs. Mech. Ay, Simon, and for little or nothing : only victuals and cloaths, more cost than worship.—Why does not the wench take the things from the fellow ? Well, what's your fare ?

Coachm. Mistress, it's honestly worth half a crown.

Mrs. Mech. Give him a couple of shillings and send him away.

Coachm. I hope you'll tip me the tester to drink ?

Mrs. Mech. Them there fellows are never contented ; drink ! stand farther off ; why you smell already as strong as a beer-barrel.

Coachm. Mistress, that's because I have already been drinking.

Mrs. Mech. And are not you ashamed, you sot, to be eternally guzzling ? You had better buy you some cloaths.

Coachm. No, mistress, my honour won't let me do that.

Mrs. Mech. Your honour ! and pray how does that hinder you ?

Coachm.

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Coachm. Why, when a good gentlewoman like you, cries, Here coachman, here's something to drink.—

Mrs. Mech. Well!

Coachm. Wou'd it be honour in me to lay it out in any thing else? No, mistress, my conscience won't let me, because why, it's the will of the donor, you know.

Mrs. Mech. Did you ever hear such a block-head?

Coachm. No, no, mistress; tho' I am a poor man, I won't forfeit my honour; my cattle, tho' I love 'em, poor beastesses, are not more dearer to me than that.

Mrs. Mech. Yes, you and your horses give pretty strong proofs of your love and your honour; for you have no cloaths on your back, and they have no flesh. Well, Jenny, give him the six-pence; there there, lay it out as you will.

Coachm. It will be to your health, mistress; it shall melt at the Meuse, before I go home; I shall be careful to clear my conscience.

Mrs. Mech. I don't doubt it.

Coachm. You need not. Mistress, your servant.

[*Exit Coachman.*]

Mrs. Mech. Has there been any body here, Jenny?

Jenny. The gentleman, ma'am, about the Gloucestershire living.

Mrs. Mech. He was, Oh oh! what I suppose his stomach's come down. Does he like the incumbrance? will he marry the party?

Jen. Why that article seems to go a little against him?

Mrs.

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Mrs. Mech. Does it so? then let him retire to his Cumberland curacy: that's a fine keen air, it will soon give him an appetite. He'll stick to his honour too, till his cassock is wore to a rag.

Jen. Why, indeed, ma'am, it seems pretty rusty already.

Mrs. Mech. Devilish squeamish, I think; a good fat living, and a fine woman into the bargain! You told him a friend of the lady's will take the child off her hands?—

Jen. Yes, madam.

Mrs. Mech. So that the affair will be a secret to all but himself. But he must quickly resolve, for next week his wife's month will be up.

Jen. He promised to call about four.

Mrs. Mech. But don't let him think we are at a loss for a husband; there is to my knowledge a merchant's clerk in the city, a comely young man, and comes of good friends, that will take her with but a small place in the custom-house.

Jen. He shall know it.

Mrs. Mech. Ay, and tell him, that the party's party has interest enough to obtain it whenever he will. And then the bridegroom may put the purchase-money too of that same presentation into his pocket.

Jen. Truly, ma'am, I should think this would prove the best match for the lady.

Mrs. Mech. Who doubts it?—Here, Jenny, carry these things above stairs. Take care of the eigarette, leave the watch upon the table, and be sure you don't mislay the pearl necklace; the lady

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lady goes to Mrs. Cornellys's to night; and, if she has any luck, she will be sure to redeem it to-morrow.

Sim. What a world of affairs! it is a wonder, madam, how you are able to remember them all.

Mrs. Mech. Trifles, mere trifles, master Simon.—But I have a great affair in hand.—Such an affair, if well managed, it will be the making of us all.

Sim. If I, ma'am, can be of the least use—

Mrs. Mech. Of the highest! there is no doing without you.—You know the great—

Enter JENNY.

Jen. I have put the things where you ordered, ma'am.

Mrs. Mech. Very well, you may go.

[Exit Jenny.]

I say, you know the great commissary, that is come to lodge in my house. Now they say this Mr. Fungus is as rich as an Indian governor; heaven knows how he came by it: but that you know is no business of ours. Pretty pickings, I warrant, abroad. *[Loud knocking.]*

Who the deuce can that be? But let it be who it will, you must not go till I speak to you.

Enter JENNY.

Jen. The widow Loveit, ma'am,

Mrs. Mech. What, the old liquorish dowager from Devonshire Square? shew her in. *[Exit Jenny.]* You'll wait in the kitchen, Simon, I shall soon dispatch her affair. *[Exit Simon.]*

Enter Mrs. LOVEIT.

Mrs. Lev. So, so, good morning to you, good Mrs.

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Mrs. Mechlin. John, let the coach wait at the corner.

Mrs. Mech. You had better sit here, madam.

Mrs. Lov. Any where. Well, my dear woman, I hope you have not forgot your old friend—Ugh, ugh, ugh,—[coughs.] Consider I have no time to loose, and you are always so full of employment.

Mrs. Mech. Forgot you! you shall judge, Mrs. Loveit. I have, ma'am, provided a whole cargo of husbands for you, of all nations, complexions, ages, tempers, and sizes: so you see you have nothing to do but choose.

Mrs. Lov. To choose! Mrs. Mechlin; Lord help me, what choice can I have? I look upon wedlock to be a kind of a lottery, and I have already drawn my prize; and a great one it was! My poor dear man that's gone, I shall never meet with his fellow.

Mrs. Mech. 'Pshaw! madam, don't let us trouble our heads about him, it's high time that he was forgot.

Mrs. Lov. But won't his relations think me rather too quick.

Mrs. Mech. Nor a jot; the greatest compliment you cou'd pay to his memory; it is a proof he gave you reason to be fond of the state. But what do you mean by quick! Why he has been bury'd these three weeks—

Mrs. Lov. And three days, Mrs. Mechlin.

Mrs. Mech. Indeed! quite an age!

Mrs. Lov. Yes; but I shall never forget him; sleeping, or waking, he's always before me. His dear swell'd belly, and his poor shrunk legs, Lord bless me, Mrs. Mechlin, he had no more calf than my fan.

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Mrs. Mech. No!

Mrs. Lov. No, indeed; and then, his bit of a purple nose, and his little weezen face as sharp as a razor—don't mention it, I can never forget him. [*Cries.*]

Mrs. Mech. Sweet marks of remembrance, indeed. But, ma'am, if you continue to be so fond of your last husband, what makes you think of another?

Mrs. Lov. Why, what can I do, Mrs. Mechlin? a poor lone widow woman as I am; there's no body minds me; my tenants behind-hand, my servants all careless, my children undutiful—Ugh, ugh, ugh——[*coughs.*]

Mrs. Mech. You have a villainous cough, Mrs. Loveit; shall I send for some lozenges?

Mrs. Lov. No, I thank you, it's nothing at all; mere habit, just a little trick I've got.

Mrs. Mech. But I wonder you shou'd have all these vexations to plague you, madam, you, who are so rich, and so——

Mrs. Lov. Forty thousand in the Four per Cents. every morning I rise, Mrs. Mechlin, besides two houses at Hackney; but then my affairs are so weighty and intricate; there is such tricking in lawyers, and such torments in children, that I can't do by myself; I must have a helpmate; quite necessity, no matter of choice.

Mrs. Mech. Oh, I understand you, you marry merely for convenience; just only to get an assistant, a kind of a guard, a fence to your property?

Mrs. Lov. Nothing else.

Mrs. Mech. I thought so; quite prudential; so that age is none of your object; you don't want a scampering, giddy, sprightly, young—

Mrs.

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Mrs. Lov. Young! Heaven forbid. What, do you think, like some ladies I know, that I want to have my husband taken for one of my grand-children; No, no; thank Heaven, such vain thoughts never enter'd my head.

Mrs. Mech. But yet, as your matters stand, he ought not to be so very old neither; for instance now, of what use to you wou'd be a husband of sixty?

Mrs. Lov. Sixty! Are you mad, Mrs. Mechlin, what do you think I want to turn nurse?

Mrs. Mech. Or fifty-five?

Mrs. Lov. Ugh, ugh, ugh——

Mrs. Mech. Or fifty?

Mrs. Lov. Oh! that's too cunning an age; men, now-adays, rarely marry at fifty, they are too knowing and cautious.

Mrs. Mech. Or forty-five, or forty, or——

Mrs. Lov. Shall I, Mrs. Mechlin, tell you a piece of my mind?

Mrs. Mech. I believe, ma'am, that will be your best way.

Mrs. Lov. Why then, as my children are young and rebellious, the way to secure and preserve their obedience, will be to marry a man that won't grow old in a hurry.

Mrs. Mech. Why I thought you declar'd against youth?

Mrs. Lov. So I do, so I do; but then, six or seven and twenty is not so very young, Mrs. Mechlin.

Mrs. Mech. No, no, a pretty ripe age; for at that time of life, men can bustle and stir, they are not easily check'd, and whatever they take in hand they go through with.

Mrs. Lov. True, true.

Mrs. Mech. Ay, ay, it is then they may be said to be useful; it is the only tear and wear season.

Mrs. Love. Right, right.

Mrs. Mech. Well, ma'am, I see what you want, and to-morrow about this time, if you'll do me the favour to call——

Mrs. Lov. I shan't fail.

Mrs. Mech. I think I can suit you.

Mrs. Lov. You'll be very obliging.

Mrs. Mech. You may depend upon't, I'll do my endeavours.

Mrs. Lov. But, Mrs. Mechlin, be sure don't let him be older than that, not above seven or eight and twenty at most; and let it be as soon as you conveniently can.

Mrs. Mech. Never fear, ma'am.

Mrs. Lov. Because you know, the more children I have by the second venter, the greater plague I shall prove to those I had by the first.

Mrs. Mech. True, ma'am. You had better lean on me to the door; but, indeed, Mrs. Loveit, you are very malicious to your children, very revengeful, indeed.

Mrs. Mech. Ah, they deserve it; you can't think what sad whelps they turn out; no punishment can be too much; if their poor father cou'd but have foreseen they wou'd have—— why did I mention the dear man! it melts me too much. Well, peace be with him.—— To-morrow about this time, Mrs. Mechlin, will the party be here, think you?

Mrs. Mech. I can't say.

Mrs. Lov. Well, a good day, good Mrs. Mechlin.

Mrs.

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Mrs. Mech. Here, John, take care of your mistress. [Exit *Mrs. Loveit*.]

A good morning to you, ma'am. Jenny, bid Simon come up.—A husband! there now is a proof of the prudence of age; I wonder they don't add a clause to the act to prevent the old from marrying clandestinely as well as the young. I am sure there are as many unsuitable matches at this time of life as the other.

Enter SIMON.

Shut the door, Simon. Are there any of Mr. Fungus's servants below?

Sim. Three or four strange faces.

Mrs. Mech. Ay, ay, some of that troop, I suppose; come, Simon, be seated.—Well, Simon, as I was telling you; this Mr. Fungus, my lodger above, that has brought home from the wars a whole cart load of money, and who, (between you and I) went there from very little better than a driver of carts——

Sim. I formerly knew him, ma'am.

Mrs. Mech. But he does not know you?

Sim. No, no.

Mrs. Mech. I am glad of that—this spark, I say, not content with being really as rich as a lord, is determin'd to rival them too in every other accomplishment.

Sim. Will that be so easy? why he must be upwards of—

Mrs. Mech. Fifty, I warrant.

Sim. Rather late in life to set up for a gentleman.

Mrs. Mech. But fine talents you know, and a strong inclination.—

Sim.

Sim. That, indeed.—

Mrs. Mech. Then I promise you he spares for no pains.

Sim. Diligent?

Mrs. Mech. Oh, always at it. Learning something or other from morning to night; my house is a perfect academy, such a throng of fencers, dancers, riders, musicians—but, however, to sweeten the pill, I have a fellow-feeling for recommending the teachers.

Sim. No doubt, ma'am; that's always the rule.

Mrs. Mech. But one of his studies is really diverting, I own I can't help laughing at that.

Sim. What may that be?

Mrs. Mech. Oratory.—You must know his first ambition is to have a seat in a certain assembly; and in order to appear there with credit, Mr. What d'ye Call'em, the man from the city, attends every morning to give him a lecture upon speaking, and there is such haranguing and bellowing between them—Lord have mercy upon—but you'll see enough on't yourself; for do you know, Simon, you are to be his valet de chambre?

Sim. Me, madam!

Mrs. Mech. Ay, his privy counsellor, his confidant, his director in chief.

Sim. To what end will that answer?

Mrs. Mech. There I am coming—You are to know, that our 'Squire Wou'd-be is violently bent upon matrimony; and nothing forsooth will go down but a person of rank and condition.

Sim. Ay, ay, for that piece of pride he's indebted to Germany.

Mrs.

Mrs. Mech. The article of fortune he holds in utter contempt, a grand alliance is all that he wants; so that the lady has but her veins full of high blood, he does not care two-pence how low and empty her purse is.

Sim. But, ma'am, won't it be difficult to meet with a suitable subject? I believe there are few ladies of quality that——

Mrs. Mech. Oh, as to that, I am already provided.

Sim. Indeed I

Mrs. Mech. You know my niece Dolly?

Sim. Very well.

Mrs. Mech. What think you of her?

Sim. Of Miss Dolly, for what?

Mrs. Mech. For what? you are plaguily dull; why, a woman of fashion, you dunce.

Sim. To be sure Miss Dolly is very deserving, and few ladies have a better appearance; but, bless me, Madam, here people of rank are so generally known, that the slightest enquiry wou'd poison your project.

Mrs. Mech. Oh, Simon, I have no fears from that quarter; there I think, I am pretty secure.

Sim. If that, indeed, be the case.—

Mrs. Mech. In the first place, Mr. Fungus has an intire reliance on me.

Sim. That's something.

Mrs. Mech. Then to baffle any idle curiosity, we are not derived from any of your new-fangled gentry, who owe their upstart nobility to your Harry's and Edwards. No, no, we are scions from an older stock; we are the hundred and fortieth lineal descendant from Hercules Alexander, earl of Glendowery, prime minister to king Malcolm the First.

Sim.

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Sim. Odsso! a qualification for a canon of Strasbourg. So then it seems you are transplanted from the Banks of the Tweed; Cry you mercy! But how will Miss Dolly be able to manage the accent!

Mrs. Mech. Very well; she was two years an actress in Edenborough.

Sim. That's true; is the overture made, has there been any interview?

Mrs. Mech. Several; we have no dislike to his person; can't but own he is rather agreeable; and as to his proposals, they are greater than we cou'd desire; but we are prudent and careful, say nothing without the Earl's approbation.

Sim. Oh, that will be easily had.

Mrs. Mech. Not so easily; and now comes your part: but first, how goes the world with you, Simon?

Sim. Never worse! The ten bags of tea, and the cargo of brandy, them peering rascals took from me in Suffex, has quite broken my back.

Mrs. Mech. Poor Simon! why then I am afraid there's an end of your traffick.

Sim. Totally: for now those fellows have got the Isle of Man in their hands, I have no chance to get home, Mrs. Mechlin.

Mrs. Mech. Then you are intirely at leisure?

Sim. As a Bath turnspit in the month of July.

Mrs. Mech. You are then, Simon, an old family servant in waiting here on the lady; but dispatch'd to the North with a view to negotiate the treaty, you are just returned with the noble Peer's resolution. Prepare you a suitable equipage, I will provide you with a couple of letters, one for the lover and one for the lady——

Sim.

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Sim. The contents —

Mrs. Mech. Oh, you may read them within : now with regard to any questions, I will furnish you with suitable answers ; but you have a bungler to deal with, so your cards will be easily play'd.

Enter JENNY.

Jen. Miss Dolly, Ma'am, in a hackney coach at the corner ; may she come in ?

Mrs. Mech. Are the servants out of the way ?

Jen. Oh, she is so muffled up and disguised, that she'll run no danger from them.

Mrs. Mech. Be sure keep good watch at the door, Jenny.

Jen. Oh, never fear, Ma'am. [*Exit Jenny.*]

Mrs. Mech. Simon, take those two letters that are under the furthestmost cushion in the window, run home, get a dirty pair of boots on, a great coat, and a whip, and be here with them in half an hour at farthest.

Sim. I will not fail. But have you no farther directions ?

Mrs. Mech. Time enough. I shall be in the way ; for it is me that must introduce you above. [*Exit Simon.*] So, things seem now in a pretty good train ; a few hours, it is to be hoped, will make me easy for life. To say truth, I begin to be tir'd of my trade. To be sure the profits are great ; but then, so are the risks that I run : besides, my private practice begins to be smok'd. Ladies are suppos'd to come here with different designs than merely to look at my goods : some of my best customers too, are got out of my channel, and manage
D their

their matters at home by their maids. Those asylums, they gave a dreadful blow to my business. Time has been, when a gentleman wanted a friend, I could supply him with choice in an hour; but the market is spoiled, and a body might as soon produce a hare or a partridge as a pretty———[*Enter Dolly.*]——So Niece, are all things prepar'd; have you got the papers from Harpy?

Dolly. Here they are, ma'am.

Mrs. Mech. Let me see—Oh the marriage articles for Fungus to sign. Have you got the contract about you?

Dolly. You know, aunt, I left it with you.

Mrs. Mech. True, I had forgot: but where is the bond that I——Here it is; this, Dolly, you must sign and seal before witness.

Dolly. To what end, aunt?

Mrs. Mech. Only, child, a trifling acknowledgment for all the trouble I have taken; a little hint to your husband, that he may reimburse your poor aunt, for your cloaths, board, lodging, and breeding.

Dolly. I hope my aunt does not suspect that I can ever be wanting——

Mrs. Mech. No, my dear, not in the least: but it is best, Dolly, in order to prevent all retrospection, that we settle accounts before you change your condition.

Dolly. But, ma'am, may not I see the contents?

Mrs. Mech. The contents, love, of what use will that be to you? Sign and seal, that's enough.

Dolly. But, aunt, I choose to see what I sign.

Mrs.

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Mrs. Meck. To see, what then you suspect me?

Dolly. No, ma'am; but a little caution——

Mrs. Meck. Caution! Here's an impudent baggage! how dare you dispute my commands; have not I made you, raised you from nothing, and won't a word from my mouth reduce you again?

Dolly. Madam, I——

Mrs. Meck. Answer me, huffly, was not you a beggar's brat at my door; did not I, out of compassion, take you into my house, call you my niece, and give you suitable breeding?

Dolly. True, madam.

Mrs. Meck. And what return did you make me? You was scarce got into your teens, you forward slut, but you brought me a child almost as big as yourself; and a delightful father you chose for it! Doctor Catgut, the meagre musician; that sick monkey-face maker of crotchets; that eternal trotter after all the little draggle-tail'd girls of the town. Oh, you low slut, had it been by a gentleman, it would not have vex'd me; but a fidler!

Dolly. For heaven's sake.——

Mrs. Meck. After that you elop'd, commenc'd stroller, and in a couple of years, return'd to town in your original trim, with scarce a rag to your back.

Dolly. Pray, ma'am——

Mrs. Meck. Did not I, notwithstanding, receive you again? have not I tortured my brains for your good? found you a husband as rich as a Jew, just brought all my matters to bear, and now you refuse to sign a paltry paper?

Dolly. Pray, madam, give it me, I will sign, execute, do all that you bid me,

Mrs. Mech. You will ; yes, so you had best, And what's become of the child, have you done as I order'd ?

Dolly. The doctor was not at home ; but the nurse left the child in the kitchen.

Mrs. Mech. You heard nothing from him ?

Dolly. Not a word.

Mrs. Mech. Then he is meditating some mischief, I warrant. However, let our good stars secure us to-day, and a fig for what may happen to-morrow. It is a little unlucky tho', that Mr. Fungus has chosen the doctor for his master of music ; but as yet he has not been here, and, if possible, we must prevent him.

Enter JENNY, hastily.

Jen. Mr. Fungus, the tallow chandler, ma'am, is crossing the way, shall I say you are at home ?

Mrs. Mech. His brother has servants enough, let some of them answer. Hide, Dolly. [*Exit Dolly and Jenny.*]—[*One knock at the door.*] Ay, that's the true tap of the trader ; this old brother of ours tho' is smoaky and shrewd, and tho' an odd, a sensible fellow ; we must guard against him : if he gets but an inkling, but the slightest suspicion, our project is marr'd.—[*A noise without.*] What the deuce is the matter ! As I live, a squabble between him and La Fleur, the French footman we hir'd this morning. This may make mirth, I'll listen a little.

[*Retires.*

Enter

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Enter Mr. ISAAC FUNGUS, driving in LA FLEUR,

I. Fung. What, is there no body in the house that can give me an answer; where's my brother, you rascal?

La Fleur. Je n'entend pas.

I. Fung. Pas, what the devil is that; answer yes or no, is my brother at home? don't shrug up your shoulders at me, you——Oh, here comes a rational being.

Enter Mrs. MECHLIN.

Madam Mechlin, how fares it? this here lantern-jaw'd rascal won't give me an answer, and indeed wou'd scarce let me into the house.

La Fleur. C'est gros Bourgeois a fait une tapage de diable.

Mrs. Mech. Fy donc c'est le frere de monsieur.

La Fleur. Le frere! Mon Dieu!

I. Fung. What is all this? what the devil linguo is the fellow a-talking?

Mrs. Mech. This is a footman from France that your brother has taken.

I. Fung. From France! and is that the best of his breeding? I thought we had taught them better manners abroad, than to come here and insult us at home. People make such a rout about smuggling their frenchified goods, their men do us more mischief. If we could but hinder the importing of them——

Mrs. Mech. Ay, you are a true Briton, I see that, Mr. Isaac,

I. Fung.

I. Fung. I warrant me ; is brother Zachary at home ?

Mrs. Mech. Above stairs, Sir.

I. Fung. Any company with him ?

Mrs. Mech. Not any to hinder your visit. La Fleur, ouvrez le porte.

I. Fung. Get along you——Mrs. Mechlin, your servant.——I can't think what the devil makes your quality so fond of the monsieurs ; for my part I don't see——March and be hang'd to you—you sooty-fac'd——

[*Exeunt I. Fungus, and La Fleur.*]

Mrs. Mech. Come Dolly, you now may appear.

Enter JENNY.

Jen. Mr. Paduasoy, ma'am, the Spital-fields weaver ; he has been waiting this hour, and says he has some people at home——

Mrs. Mech. Let him enter ; in a couple of minutes I'll follow you, Dolly. [*Exit Jenny.*]

Enter PADUASOY.

Mrs. Mech. Mr. Paduasoy, you may load yourself home with those silks, they won't do for my market.

Mr. Pad. Why, what's the matter, Madam ?

Mrs. Mech. Matter ! you are a pretty fellow indeed ; you a tradesman ! but it's lucky I know you, things might have been worse ; let us settle accounts, Mr. Paduasoy ; you'll see no more of my money.

Mr. Pad. I shall be sorry for that, Mrs. Mechlin,

I

Mrs.

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Mrs. Mech. Sorry ! answer me one question ; am not I the best customer that ever you had ?

Pad. I confess it.

Mrs. Mech. Have not I mortgaged my precious soul, by swearing to my quality-customers that the stuff from your looms was the produce of Lyons ?

Pad. Granted.

Mrs. Mech. And unless that had been believ'd, could you have sold them a yard, nay a nail ?

Pad. I believe not.

Mrs. Mech. Very well. Did not, Sir, I procure you more money for your curs'd goods, when sold as the manufacture of France, than as mere English they could have ever produced you ?

Pad. I never deny'd it.

Mrs. Mech. Then are not you a pretty fellow, to blow up and ruin my reputation at once ?

Pad. Me, Madam !

Mrs. Mech. Yes, you.

Pad. As how ?

Mrs. Mech. Did not you tell me these pieces of silk were entire, and the only ones you had made of that pattern ?

Pad. I did.

Mrs. Mech. Now mind. Last Monday I left them as just landed, upon a pretence to secure them from seizure, at the old countess of Furbelow's, by whose means, I was sure, at my own price, to get rid of them both ; and who should come in last night at the ball at the Mansion-House, where my lady unluckily happen'd to be, with a full suit of the blue pattern upon her back, but Mrs. Deputy Dowlass, dizen'd out like a duchess.

Pad.

Pad. Mrs. Deputy Dowlass! Is it possible?

Mrs. Mech. There is no denying the fact! but that was not all; if indeed Mrs. Deputy had behaved like a gentlewoman, and swore they had been sent her from Paris, why there the thing would have died: but see what it is to have to do with mechanicks, the fool owned she had them from you. I should be glad to see any of my customers at a loss for a lye. But those trumpery traders, Mr. Paduasoy, you'll never gain any credit by them.

Pad. This must be a trick of my wife's; I know the women are intimate, but this piece of intelligence will make a hot house. None of my fault indeed, Mrs. Mechlin; I hope, ma'am, this won't make any difference?

Mrs. Mech. Difference! I don't believe I shall be able to smuggle a gown for you these six months. What is in that bundle?

Pad. Some India handkerchiefs, that you promis'd to procure of a supercargo at Woolwich, for Sir Thomas Callico's lady.

Mrs. Mech. Are you pretty forward with the light sprigg'd waistcoats from Italy?

Pad. They will be out of the loom in a week.

Mrs. Mech. You need not put any Genoa velvets in hand till the end of the autumn; but you may make me immediately a fresh sortment of foreign ribbons for summer.

Pad. Any other commands, Mrs. Mechlin?

Mrs. Mech. Not at present, I think.

Pad. I wish you, madam, a very good morning.

Mrs. Mech. Mr. Paduasoy, Lord! I had lik'd to have forgot. You must write an anonymous letter

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etter to the Custom-house, and send me some old silks to be seized; I must treat the town with a bonfire: it will make a fine paragraph for the papers; and at the same time advertise the public where such things may be had.

Pad. I shan't fail, madam. [*Exit Paduasoy.*]

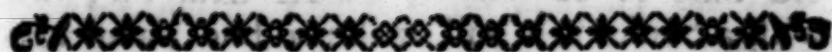
Mrs. Mech. Who says now that I am not a friend to my country! I think the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, should vote me a premium. I am sure I am one of the greatest encouragers of our own manufactures.

[*Exit Mrs. Mechlin.*]

END of the FIRST ACT.

E

ACT



A C T II.

SCENE First Continues.

Enter COMMISSARY FUNGUS, ISAAC FUNGUS,
and Mrs. MECHLIN.

Zac. Fungus.

BROTHER Isaac, you are a blockhead,
I tell you. But first answer me this; can
knowledge do a man any harm?

I. Fun. No, farting; what is befitting a man
for to learn.

Z. Fun. To learn! and how should you
know what is befitting a gentleman to learn!
Stick to your trade, master tallow-chandler.

I. Fun. Now, brother Zachary, can you say
in your conscience, as how, it is descent to be
learning to dance, when you ha' almost lost the
use of your legs?

Z. Fun. Lost the use of my legs! to see but
the malice of men! Do but ax Mrs. Mechlin;
now, ma'am, does not Mrs. Dukes say, that, con-
sidering my time, I have made a wonderful pro-
gress?

I. Fun. Your time, brother Zac!

Z. Fun. Ay, my time, brother Isaac. Why,
I ha'nt been at it passing a couple of months,
and we have at our school too aldermen and a
ser-

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serjeant at law, that were full half a year before they could get out of hand.

Mrs. Mech. Very true, Sir.

Z. Fun. There now, Mrs. Mechlin can vouch it. And pray, ma'am, does not master allow, that of my age, I am the most hopeful scholar he has?

Mrs. Mech. I can't but say, Mr. Isaac, that the 'squire has made a most prodigious improvement.

Z. Fun. Do you hear that? I wish we had but a kit, I would show you what I could do: one, two, three, ha. One, two, three, ha. There are risings and sinkings.

Mrs. Mech. Ay, marry, as light as a cork.

Z. Fun. A'n't it! Why, before next winter is over, he says, he'll fit me for dancing in public; and who knows but in Lent, you may see me amble at a Ridotto with an opera singer.

Mrs. Mech. And I warrant he acquits himself as well as the best.

I. Fun. Mercy on me; and pray brother, that thing like a sword in your hand, what may the use of that implement be?

Z. Fun. This! oh, this is a foil.

I. Fun. A foil.

Z. Fun. Ay, a little instrument, by which, we who are gentlemen, are instructed to kill one another.

I. Fun. To kill! Marry, heaven forbid; I hope you have no such bloody intentions. Why, brother Zac. you was used to be a peaceable man.

Z. Fun. Ay, that was when I was a paltry mechanic, and afraid of the law, but now I am another guess person; I have been in camps,

cantons, and intrenchments: have marched over bridges and breaches; I have seen the Ezel and Wezell; I'm got as rich as a Jew, and if any man dares to affront me, I'll let him know that my trade has been fighting.

I. Fun. Rich as a Jew! Ah, Zac. Zac. but if you had not had another gue's trade than fighting, I doubt whether you would have returned altogether so rich: but now you have got all this wealth, why not sit down and enjoy it in quiet?

Z. Fun. Hark ye, Isaac, do you purtend to know life? are you acquainted with the Beaux d'Esprits of the age?

I. Fun. I don't understand you.

Z. Fun. No, I believe not; then how should you know what belongs to gentility?

I. Fun. And why not as well as you, brother Zac. I hope I am every whit as well born?

Z. Fun. Ay, Isaac, but the breeding is all; consider I have been a gentleman above five years and three quarters, and I think should know a little what belongs to the business; hey, Mrs. Mechlin?

Mrs. Mech. Very true, Sir.

Z. Fun. And as to this foil, do you know, Isaac, in what the art of fencing consists?

I. Fun. How shou'd I?

Z. Fun. Why it is short; there are but two rules; the first is, to give your antagonist as many thrusts as you can; the second, to be careful and receive none yourself.

I. Fun. But how this is to be done?

Z. Fun. Oh, easy enough: for do you see, if you can but divert your adversary's point from the line of your body, it is impossible he ever should

should hit you ; and all this is done by a little turn of the wrist, either this way, or that way. But I'll show you : John, bring me a foil. Mrs. Mechlin, it will be worth your observing. Here, brother Isaac.——[*Offers him a foil.*]

I. Fun. Not I.

Z. Fun. These bourgeois are so frightful. Mrs. Mechlin, will you, ma'am, do me the favour to push at me a little ? Mind, brother, when she thrusts at me in carte, I do so ; and when she pushes in tierce, I do so ; and by this means a man is sure to avoid being killed. But it may not be amiss, brother Isaac, to give you the progress of a regular quarrel ; and then you will see what sort of a thing a gentleman is. Now I have been told, do see, brother Isaac, by a friend who has a regard for my honour, that Captain Jenkins, or Hopkins, or Wilkins, or what captain you please, has in public company call'd me a cuckold——

I. Fun. A cuckold ? But how can that be ? because why, brother Zac. you be'nt married.

Z. Fun. But as I am just going to be marry'd, that may very well happen you know.

Mrs. Mech. True.

Z. Fun. Yes, yes, the thing is natural enough. Well, the captain has said, I am a cuckold. Upon which, the first time I set eyes on captain Wilkins, either at Vaux-hall, or at Ranelagh, I accost him, in a courteous, genteel-like manner.

I. Fun. And that's more than he merits.

Z. Fun. Your patience, dear Isaac——in a courteous, gentleman-like manner ; captain Hopkins, your servant.

I. Fun. Why, you call'd him but now Captain Wilkins.

Z. Fun.

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Z. Fun. Pshaw! You blockhead, I tell you the name does not signify nothing—Your servant; shall I crave your ear for a moment? The captain politely replies, Your commands, good Mr. Fungus? then we walk side by side—Come here, Mrs. Mechlin.—[*They walk up and down*] for some time as civil as can be. Mind brother Isaac.

I. Fun. I do, I do.

Z. Fun. Hey!—no, t'other side, Mrs. Mechlin.—that's right—I hear, captain Wilkins—

I. Fun. I knew it was Wilkins.

Z. Fun. Zounds! Isaac, be quiet—Wilkins, that you have taken some liberties about and concerning of me, which, damme, I don't understand—

I. Fun. Don't swear, brother Zachary.

Z. F. Did ever mortal hear the like of this fellow!

I. Fun. But you are grown such a reprobate since you went to the wars—

Z. Fun. Mrs. Mechlin, stop the tongue of that blockhead; why, dunce, I am speaking by rule, and Mrs. Mechlin can tell you that duels and damme's go always together.

Mrs. Mech. Oh, always.

Z. Fun. Which, damme, I don't understand. Liberties with you, cries the captain, where, when, and in what manner? Last Friday night, in company at the St. Alban's, you call'd me a buck, and moreover said, that my horns were exalted. Now, Sir, I know very well what was your meaning by that, and therefore demand satisfaction. That, Sir, is what I never deny

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deny to a gentleman ; but as to you, Mr. Fungus, I can't consent to give you that rank. How Sir, do you deny my gentility ! Oh, that affront must be answered this instant——Draw Sir. Now push, Mrs. Mechlin. [*They fence.*] There I parry tierce, there I parry carte, there I parry——Hold, hold, have a care, zooks ! Mrs. Mechlin.

I. Fun. Ha, ha, ha ! I think you have met with your match ; well push'd, Mrs. Mechlin.

Z. Fun. Ay, but instead of pushing in tierce, she pushed me in carte, and came so thick with her thrusts, that it was not in nature to parry them.

I. Fun. Well, well, I am fully convinc'd of your skill ; but I think, brother Zac. you hinted an intention of marrying, is that your design ?

Z. Fun. Undoubtedly.

I. Fun. And when ?

Z. Fun. Why this evening.

I. Fun. So sudden ! and pray is it a secret to whom ?

Z. Fun. A secret, no, I am proud of the match ; she brings me all that I want, her veins full of good blood ; such a family ! such an alliance ! zooks, she has a pedigree as long as the Mall, brother Isaac, with large trees on each side, and all the boughs loaded with lords.

I. Fun. But has the lady no name ?

Z. Fun. Name ! ay, such a name, lord, we have nothing like it in London : none of your stunted little dwarfish words of one syllable ; your Watts, and your Potts, and your Trotts ; this rumbles through the throat like a cart with
broad

broad wheels. Mrs. Mechlin, you can pronounce it better than me.

Mrs. Mech. Lady Sachariffa Mackirkincroft.

Z. Fun. Kirkincroft! there are a mouthful of syllables for you. Lineally descended from Hercules Alexander Charlemagne Hannibal, Earl of Glendower, prime minister to king Malcolm the first.

I. Fun. And are all the parties agreed?

Z. Fun. I can't say quite all; for the right honourable peer that is to be my pappa, (who by the bye) is as proud as the devil, has flatly renounc'd the alliance, calls me here in his letter Plebeian, and says if we have any children, they will turn out very little better than pye balls.

I. Fun. And what does the gentlewoman say?

Z. Fun. The gentlewoman! Oh, the gentlewoman, who (between ourselves) is pretty near as high as her father; but, however, my person has prov'd too hard for her pride, and I take the affair to be as good as concluded.

I. Fun. It is resolv'd?

Z. Fun. Fix'd.

I. Fun. I am sorry for it.

Z. Fun. Why so? come, come, brother Isaac, don't be uneasy, I have a shrewd guess at your grievance; but though you may not be suffer'd to see lady Scracariffa at first, yet who knows before long I may have interest enough with her to bring it about; and in the mean time you may dine when you will with the steward.

I. Fun. You are exceedingly kind.

Z. Fun. Mrs. Mechlin, you don't think my lady will gainsay it?

Mrs.

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Mrs. Mech. By no means; it is wonderful, considering her rank, how mild and condescending she is: why, but yesterday, says her ladyship to me, Though, Mrs. Mechlin, it can't be suppos'd that I shou'd admit any of the Fungus family into my presence——

Z. Fun. No, no, to be sure; not at first, as I said.

Mrs. Mech. Yet his brother, or any other relation, may dine with the servants every day.

Z. Fun. Do you hear, Isaac, there's your true, inherent nobility, so humble and affable; but people of real rank never have any pride; that is only for upstarts.

I. Fun. Wonderfully gracious; but here, brother Zac. you mistake me, it is not for myself I am sorry.

Z. Fun. Whom then?

I. Fun. For you. Don't you think that your wife will despise you?

Z. Fun. No.

I. Fun. Can you suppose that you will live together a month?

Z. Fun. Yes.

I. Fun. Why, can you bear to walk about your own house like a paltry dependant?

Z. Fun. No.

I. Fun. To have yourself and your orders contemn'd by your servants?

Z. Fun. No.

I. Fun. To see your property devour'd by your lady's beggarly cousins, who, notwithstanding, won't vouchsafe you a nod?——

Z. Fun. No.

I. Fun. Can you be blind at her bidding, run at her sending, come at her calling, dine by your-

F

self

self when she has bettermost company, and sleep six nights a week in the garret?

Z. Fun. No.

I. Fun. Why, will you dare to disobey, have the impudence to dispute the sovereign will and pleasure of a lady like her?

Z. Fun. Ay, marry will I.

I. Fun. And don't you expect a whole clan of Andrew Ferraros, with their naked points at your throat?

Z. Fun. No.

I. Fun. Then you don't know half you will have to go through.

Z. Fun. Look you, brother, I know what you wou'd be at; you don't mean I shou'd marry at all.

I. Fun. Indeed, brother Zachary, you wrong me; I shou'd with pleasure see you equally match'd, that is, to one of your own rank and condition.

Z. Fun. You wou'd? I don't doubt it, but that is a pleasure you never will have. Look you, Isaac, I have made up my mind; it is a lady I like, and a lady I will have; and if you say any more, I'll not be contented with that, for dammee, I'll marry a duchess.

Enter LA FLEUR.

La Fleur. Le Maître pour donner d'Eloquence.

Z. Fun. What does the puppy say, Mrs. Mechlin, for you know I can't parler vous.

Mrs. Mech. The gentleman from the city, that is to make you a speaker.

Z. Fun.

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Z. Fun. Odzooks ! a special fine fellow, let's have him.

Mrs. Mech. Faites le entres. [*Exit LA FLEUR.*]

I. Fun. Brother, as you are busy, I will take another——

Z. Fun. No, no, this is the finest fellow of all, it is he that is to make me a man ; and hark ye, brother, if I should chance to rise in the state, no more words, your business is done.

I. Fun. What, I reckon some member of parliament.

Z. Fun. A member ; Lord help you, brother Isaac, this man is a whole senate himself. Why it is the famous orationer that has publish'd the book.

I. Fun. What, Mr. Gruel.

Z. Fun. The same.

I. Fun. Yes, I have seen his name in the News.

Z. Fun. His knowledge is wonderful ; he has told me such secrets : Why do you know, Isaac, by what means 'tis we speak ?

I. Fun. Speak ! why we speak with our mouths.

Z. Fun. No, we don't.

I. Fun. No !

Z. Fun. No. He says we speak by means of the tongue, the teeth, and the throat ; and without them we only should bellow.

I. Fun. But surely the mouth——

Z. Fun. The mouth, I tell you, is little or nothing, only just a cavity for the air to pass through.

I. Fun. Indeed !

Z. Fun. That's all ; and when the cavity's
F 2 small,

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small, little sounds will come out; when large, the great ones proceed; observe now in whistling and bawling.—[*whistles and bawls.*]—Do you see. Oh, he is a miraculous man.

I. Fun. But of what use is all this?

Z. Fun. But it's knowledge, an't it; and of what signification is that, you fool! and then as to use, why he can make me speak in any manner he pleases; as a lawyer, a merchant, a country gentleman; whatever the subject requires,—But here he is.

Enter Mr. GRUEL.

Mr. Gruel, your servant; I have been holding forth in your praise.

Gruel. I make no doubt, Mr. Fungus, but to your declamation, or recitation, (as Quintilian more properly terms it) I shall be indebted for much future praise, in as much as the reputation of the scholar does (as I may say) confer, or rather as it were reflect, a marvellous kind of lustre on the fame of the master himself.

Z. Fun. There, Isaac! didst ever hear the like? he talks just as if it were all out of a book; what wou'd you give to be able to utter such words?

I. Fun. And what shou'd I do with them? them holiday terms wou'd not pass in my shop; there's no buying and selling with them.

Gruel. Your observation is pithy and pertinent; different stations different idioms demand, polished periods accord ill with the mouths of mechanics; but as that tribe is permitted to circulate a baser kind of coin, for the ease and
con-

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convenience of inferior traffic, so it is indulg'd with a vernacular or vicious vulgar phraseology, to carry on their interlocutory commerce; but I doubt, Sir, I soar above the region of your comprehension?

I. Fun. Why if you wou'd come down a step or two, I can't say but I shou'd understand you the better.

Z. Fun. And I too.

Gruel. Then to the familiar I fall: if the gentleman has any ambition to shine at a vestry, a common-hall, or even a convivial club, I can supply him with ample materials.

I. Fun. No, I have no such desire.

Gruel. Not to lose time; your brother here, (for such I find the gentleman is) in other respects a common man like yourself——

Z. Fun. No better.

Gruel. Observe how alter'd by means of my art: are you prepar'd in the speech on the great importance of trade?

Z. Fun. Pretty well, I believe.

Gruel. Let your gesticulations be chaste, and your muscular movements consistent.

Z. Fun. Never fear——[*Enter JENNY, and whispers Mrs. MECHLIN.*]

Mrs. Mechlin, you'll stay?

Mrs. Mech. A little business, I'll return in an instant. [Exit Mrs. MECHLIN.]

Gruel. A little here to the left, if you please, Sir, there you will only catch his profile—that's right—now you will have the full force of his face; one, two, three; now off you go.

Z. Fun. When I consider the vast importance of this day's debate; when I revolve the various

ous vicissitudes that this soil has sustain'd ; when I ponder what our painted progenitors were ; and what we, their civilized successors, are ; when I reflect, that they fed on crab-apples and chesnuts——

Gruel. Pignuts, good Sir, if you please.

Z. Fun. You are right ; crab-apples and pignuts ; and that we feast on green-peas, and on custards : when I trace in the recording historical page, that their floods gave them nothing but frogs, and now know we have fish by land-carriage, I am lost in amazement at the prodigious power of commerce. Hail commerce ! daughter of industry, consort to credit, parent of opulence, full sister to liberty, and great grandmother to the art of navigation——

I. Fun. Why this gentlewoman has a pedigree as long as your wife's, brother Zac.

Z. Fun. Prithee Isaac be quiet—art of navigation—a—a—'vigation.——Zooks, that fellow has put me quite out.

Gruel. It matters not ; this day's performance has largely fulfill'd your yesterday's promise.

Z. Fun. But I han't half done, the best is to come ; let me just give him that part about turnpegs—for the sloughs, the mires, the ruts, the impassable bogs, that the languid, but generous, steed travelled through ; he now pricks up his ears, he neighs, he canters, he capers through a whole region of turnpegs.

Enter Mrs. MECHLIN.

Mrs. Mech. Your riding-master is below.

Z. Fun. Gadso ! then here we must end.
You'll

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You'll pardon me, good Mr. Gruel; for as I want to be a finished gentleman as soon as I can, it is impossible for me to stick long to any one thing.

Gruel. Sir, Though your exit is rather abrupt, yet the multiplicity of your avocations do, (as I may say) in some measure, cicatrize the otherwise mortal wound on this occasion sustained by decorum.

Z. Fun. Cicatrize! I could hear him all day. He is a wonderful man. Well, Mr. Gruel, to-morrow we will at it again.

Gruel. You will find me prompt at your slightest volition.

Z. Fun. I wish, brother Isaac, I could have staid, you should have heard me oration way like a lawyer, about pleadings and presidents, but all in good time.— [Exit FUNGUS.

Mrs. Mech. This gentleman, Sir, will gain you vast credit.

Gruel. Yes, ma'am, the capabilities of the gentleman, I confess, are enormous; and as to you I am indebted for this promising pupil, you will permit me to expunge the obligation by an instantaneous and gratis lecture on that species of eloquence peculiar to ladies.

Mrs. Mech. Oh, Sir, I have no sort of occasion—

Gruel. As to that biped, man, (for such I define him to be) a male or masculine manner belongs—

Mrs. Mech. Any other time, good Mr. Gruel.

Gruel. So to that biped, woman, the participating of his general nature, the word homo, in Latin,

Latin, being promiscuously used as woman or man—

Mrs. Mech. For Heaven's sake—

Gruel. But being cast in a more tender and delicate mold—

Mrs. Mech. Sir, I have twenty people in waiting—

Gruel. The soft, supple, insinuating graces—

Mrs. Mech. I must insist—

Gruel. Do appertain, (as I may say) in a more peculiar, or particular, manner;—

Mrs. Mech. Nay, then—

Gruel. Her rank, in the order of entities.—

Mrs. Mech. I must thrust you out of my house.

Gruel. Not calling her forth—

Mrs. Mech. Was there ever such a—[*pushing him out.*]

Re-enter GRUEL.

Gruel. To those eminent, hazardous, and, (as I may say) perilous conflicts, which so often—

Mrs. Mech. Get down stairs, and be hang'd to you. [*Pushes him out.*] There he goes, as I live, from the top to the bottom; I hope, I han't done him a mischief: You ar'n't hurt, Mr. Gruel?—No, all's safe; I hear him going on with his speech; an impertinent puppy!

I. Fun. Impertinent, indeed, I wonder all those people don't turn your head, Mrs. Mechlin.

Mrs. Mech. Oh, I am pretty well us'd to 'em. But who comes here! Mr. Isaac, if you will step into the next room, I have something to communicate that well deserves your attention.

[*Exit ISAAC FUNGUS.*

Enter

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Enter SIMON.

Sim. Doctor Catgut at the foot of the stairs.

Mrs. Mech. The devil he is! What can have brought him at this time of day? Watch, Simon, that nobody comes up whilst he is here. [*Exit SIMON.*] I hope he has not heard of the pretty present we sent him to day.

Enter Dr. CATGUT.

Dr. Cat. Madam Mechlin, your humble. I have, ma'am, received a couple of compliments from your mansion this morning; one I find from a lodger of your's, the other I presume from your niece; but for the last, I rather suppose I am indebted to you.

Mrs. Mech. Me! indeed, Doctor, you are widely mistaken; I assure you, Sir, since your business broke out, I have never set eyes of her once.

Dr. Cat. Then I am falsely informed.

Mrs. Mech. But after all you must own it is but what you deserve; I wonder, Doctor, you don't leave off these tricks.

Dr. Cat. Why what can I do, Mrs. Mechlin? my constitution requires it.

Mrs. Mech. Indeed, I should not have thought it.

Dr. Cat. Then the dear little devils are so desperately fond.

Mrs. Mech. Without doubt.

Dr. Cat. And for frolick, flirtation, diligence, dress and address——

Mrs. Mech. To be sure.

G

Dr.

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Dr. Cat. For what you call genuine gallantry .
few men, I flatter myself, will be found that can
match me.

Mrs. Mech. Oh, that's a point given up.

Dr. Cat. Hark ye, Molly Mechlin ; let me
perish, child, you look divinely to-day.

Mrs. Mech. Indeed !

Dr. Cat. But that I have two or three affairs
on my hands, I should be positively tempted to
trifle with thee a little.

Mrs. Mech. Ay, but Doctor, consider I am
not of a trifling age, it would be only losing
your time.

Dr. Cat. Ha, so coy ! But a propos, Molly,
this lodger of your's ; who is he, and what does
he want ?

Mrs. Mech. You have heard of the great Mr.
Fungus ?

Dr. Cat. Well !

Mrs. Mech. Being informed of your skill and
abilities, he has sent for you to teach him to
sing.

Dr. Cat. Me teach him to sing ! What does
the scoundrel mean to affront me ?

Mrs. Mech. Affront you !

Dr. Cat. Why don't you know, Child, that I
quitted that paltry profession ?

Mrs. Mech. Not I.

Dr. Cat. Oh, intirely renounc'd it.

Mrs. Mech. Then what may you follow at
present ?

Dr. Cat. Me !—nothing. I am a poet, my
dear.

Mrs. Mech. A poet !

Dr. Cat. A poet. The Muses ; you know I was
always fond of the ladies : I suppose you have
heard

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heard of Shakespeare, and Shadwell, of Tom Brown, and of Milton, and Hudibras?

Mrs. Mech. I have.

Dr. Cat. I shall blast all their laurels, by gad; I have just given the public a taste, but there's a belly-full for them in my larder at home.

Mrs. Mech. Upon my word, you surprise me; but pray, is poetry a trade to be learn'd?

Dr. Cat. Doubtless. Capital as I am, I have not acquired it above a couple of years.

Mrs. Mech. And cou'd you communicate your art to another?

Dr. Cat. To be sure. Why I have here in my pocket, my dear, a whole folio of rhymes, from Z quite to great A. Let us see, A. ay, here it begins, A, as, pass, grass, mass, lass, and so quite thro' the alphabet down to Z. Zounds, grounds, mounds, pounds, hounds.

Mrs. Mech. And what do you do with those rhymes?

Dr. Cat. Oh, we supply them.

Mrs. Mech. Supply them?

Dr. Cat. Ay, fill them up, as I will shew you. Last week, in a ramble to Dulwich, I made these rhimes into a duet for a new comic opera I have on the stocks. Mind, for I look upon the words as a model for that sort of writing.

First she.—*There to see the sluggish as,
Throug the meadows as we pass,
Eating up the farmer's grass,
Blyth and merry, by the mass,
As a lively country lass.*

Mrs. Mech. Very pretty.

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Dr. Cat. A'n't it. Then he replies,

*Hear the farmer cry out, zounds !
As he trudges through the grounds,
Yonder beast has broke my mounds ;
If the parish has no pounds,
Kill, and give him to the bounds.*

Then Da Capo, both join in repeating the last stanza; and this tack'd to a tolerable tune, will run you for a couple of months. You observe ?

Mrs. Mech. Clearly. As our gentleman is desirous to learn all kinds of things, I can't help thinking but he will take a fancy to this.

Dr. Cat. In that case, he may command me, my dear ; and I promise you, in a couple of months, he shall know as much of the matter as I do.

Mrs. Mech. At present he is a little engaged, but as soon as the honey-moon is over——

Dr. Cat. Honey-moon ! Why is he going to be marry'd ?

Mrs. Mech. This Evening, I fancy.

Dr. Cat. The finest opportunity for an introduction, in nature ; I have by me, Ma'am Mechlin, of my own composition, such an epithalium.

Mrs. Mech. Thalmium, what's that ?

Dr. Cat. A kind of an elegy, that we poets compose at the solemnization of weddings.

Mrs. Mech. Oh, ho !

Dr. Cat. It is set to musick already, for I still compose for myself,

Mrs.

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Mrs. Mech. You do?

Dr. Cat. Yes. What think you now of providing a band, and serenading the 'Squire to night? It will be a pretty extempore compliment.

Mrs. Mech. The prettiest thought in the world. But I hear Mr. Fungus's bell. You'll excuse me, dear Doctor, you may suppose we are busy.

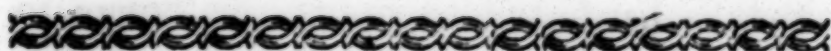
Dr. Cat. No apology then, I'll about it this instant.

Mrs. Mech. As soon as you please; any thing to get you out of the way. [*Aside and exit.*]

Dr. Cat. Your obsequious, good madam Mechlin. But notwithstanding all your fine speeches, I shrewdly suspect my blessed bargain at home was a present from you; and what shall I do with it?—These little embarrasses we men of intrigue are eternally subject to. There will be no sending it back. She will never let it enter the house.—Hey! gad, a lucky thought is come into my head—this serenade is finely contrived.—Madam Mechlin shall have her cousin again, for I will return her bye-blow in the body of a double base-viol; so the Bawd shall have a concert as well as the 'Squire.—

[*Exit Dr. CATGUT.*]

END of the SECOND ACT.



A C T III.

SCENE Continues.

Enter HARPY, YOUNG LOVEIT, and JENNY.

Harpy.

TELL your mistress my name is Harpy ; she knows me, and how precious my time is.

Jen. Mr. Harpy, the attorney of Furnival's Inn ? *[Exit Jenny.]*

Har. The same. Ay, ay, young gentleman, this is your woman ; I warrant your business is done. You knew Kitty Williams, that marry'd Mr. Abednigo Potiphar, the Jew broker ?

Y. Lov. I did.

Har. And Robin Rainbow, the happy husband of the widow Champanfy, from the isle of St. Kitt's ?

Y. Lov. I have seen him.

Har. All owing to her. Her success in that branch of business is wonderful ! Why, I dare believe, since last summer, she has not sent off less than forty couple to Edinburgh.

Y. Lov. Indeed ! She must be very adroit.

Har.

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Har. Adroit ! You shall judge. I will tell you a case : you know the large brick house at Peckham, with a turret at top ?

Y. Lov. Well.

Har. There liv'd Miss Cicely Mite, the only daughter of old Mite the cheesemonger, at the corner of Newgate-street, just turn'd of fourteen, and under the wing of an old maiden aunt, as watchful as a dragon—but hush—I hear Mrs. Mechlin, I'll take another season to finish my tale.

Y. Lov. But, Mr. Harpy, as these kind of women are a good deal given to gossiping, I wou'd rather my real name was a secret till there is a sort of necessity.

Har. Gossiping ! She, lord help you, she is as close as a Catholic confessor.

Y. Lov. That may be, but you must give me leave to insist.

Har. Well, well, as you please.

Enter Mrs. MECHLIN.

Your very humble servant, good madam Mechlin ; I have taken the liberty to introduce a young gentleman, a friend of mine, to crave your assistance.

Mrs. Mech. Any friend of yours, Mr. Harpy ; won't you be seated, Sir.

Y. Lov. Ma'am.

[*They sit down.*]

Mrs. Mech. And pray, Sir, how can I serve you ?

Har. Why, ma'am, the gentleman's situation is—but, Sir, you had better state your case to Mrs. Mechlin yourself.

Y. Lov.

Y. Lov. Why, you are to know, ma'am, that I am just escap'd from the University, where (I need not tell you) you are greatly esteem'd.

Mrs. Mech. Very obliging. I must own, Sir, I have had a very great respect for that learned body, ever since they made a near and dear friend of mine a doctor of music.

Y. Lov. Yes, ma'am, I remember the gentleman.

Mrs. Mech. Do you know him, Sir? I expect him here every minute to instruct a lodger of mine.

Y. Lov. Not intimately. Just arriv'd, but last night; upon my coming to town I found my father deceas'd, and all his fortune devis'd to his reliſt, my mother.

Mrs. Mech. What, the whole!

Y. Lov. Every ſhilling. That is, for her life.

Mrs. Mech. And to what ſum may it amount?

Y. Lov. Why, my mother is eternally telling me, that after her, I ſhall inherit fifty or ſixty thouſand at leaſt.

Mrs. Mech. Upon my word, a capital ſum.

Y. Lov. But of what uſe, my dear Mrs. Mechlin, ſince ſhe refuſes to advance me a guinea upon the credit of it, and while the graſs grows— You know the proverb.—

Mrs. Mech. What, I ſuppoſe you want ſomething for preſent ſubſiſtence.

Y. Lov. Juſt my ſituation.

Mrs. Mech. Have you thought of nothing for yourſelf?

Y. Lov. I am reſolv'd to be guided by you.

Mrs. Mech. What do you think of a wife?

Y. Lov. A wife!

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Mrs. Mech. Come, come, don't despise my advice; when a young man's finances are low, a wife is a much better resource than a usurer; and there are in this town a number of kind-hearted widows, that take a pleasure in repairing the injuries done by fortune to handsome young fellows.

Har. Mrs. Mechlin has reason.

Y. Lov. But, dear ma'am, what can I do with a wife?

Mrs. Mech. Do! Why, like other young fellows who marry ladies a little stricken in years; make her your banker and steward. If you say but the word, before night I'll give you a widow with two thousand a year in her pocket.

Y. Lov. Two thousand a year! a pretty employment, if the residence cou'd but be dispens'd with.

Mrs. Mech. What do you mean by residence? Do you think a gentleman, like a pitiful trader, is to be eternally tack'd to his wife's petticoat: when she is in town, be you in the country; as she shifts do you shift. Why, you need not be with her above thirty days in the year; and let me tell you, you won't find a more easy condition; twelve months subsistence for one month's labour!

Y. Lov. Two thousand a year, you are sure?

Mrs. Mech. The least penny.

Y. Lov. Well, madam, you shall dispose of me just as you please.

Mrs. Mech. Very well, if you will call in half an hour at farthest, I believe we shall finish the business.

Y. Lov. In half an hour?

H

Mrs.

Mrs. Mech. Precisely. Oh, dispatch is the very life and soul of my trade. Mr. Harpy will tell you my terms, you will find them reasonable enough.

Har. Oh, I am sure we shall have no dispute about those.

Y. Lov. No, no.—[*Going.*]

Mrs. Mech. Oh, but Mr. Harpy, it may be proper to mention that the gentlewoman, the party, is upwards of sixty.

Y. Lov. With all my heart; it is the purse, not the person I want! Sixty! she is quite a girl; I wish with all my soul she was ninety.

Mrs. Mech. Get you gone, you are a devil, I see that.

Y. Lov. Well, for half an hour, sweet Mrs. Mechlin, adieu.

[*Exeunt Young Loveit and Harpy.*]

Mrs. Mech. Soh! I have provided for my dowager from Devonshire-square, and now to cater for my commissary. Here he comes.

Enter FUNGUS and BRIDOUN.

Fun. So, in six weeks—Oh, Mrs. Mechlin, any news from the lady?

Mrs. Mech. I expect her here every moment. She is conscious that in this step, she descends from her dignity; but being desirous to screen you from the fury of her noble relations, she is determined to let them see that the act and deed is intirely her own.

Fun. Very kind, very obliging indeed. But, Mrs. Mechlin, as the family is so furious, I reckon we shall never be reconcil'd.

Mrs.

THE COMMISSARY. 51

Mrs. Mech. I don't know that. When you have bought commissions for her three younger brothers, discharg'd the mortgage on the paternal estate, and portioned off eight or nine of her sisters, it is not impossible but my lord may be prevailed on to suffer your name—

Fun. Do you think so?

Mrs. Mech. But then a work of time, Mr. Fungus.

Fun. Ay, ay, I know very well things of that kind are not brought about in a hurry.

Mrs. Mech. But I must prepare matters for the lady's reception.

Fun. By all means. The jewels are sent to her ladyship?

Mrs. Mech. To be sure.

Fun. And the ring for her ladyship, and her ladyship's licence?

Mrs. Mech. Ay, ay, and her ladyship's parson too; all are prepar'd.

Fun. Parson! why won't her ladyship please to be marry'd at Powl's?

Mrs. Mech. Lord, Mr. Fungus, do you think a lady of her rank and condition would bear to be seen in public at once with a person like you?

Fun. That's true, I——

Mrs. Mech. No, no; I have sent to Dr. Tickletext, and the business will be done in the parlour below.

Fun. As you and her ladyship pleases, good Mrs. Mechlin.

Mrs. Mech. You will get dress'd as soon as you can.

H 2

Fun.

Fun. I shall only take a short lesson from Mr. Bridoun, and then wait her ladyship's pleasure. Mrs. Mechlin, may my brother be by?

Mrs. Mech. Ay, ay, provided his being so is kept a secret from her.

Fun. Never fear.—[*Exit Mrs. Mechlin.*] Well, Mr. Bridoun, and you think I am mended a little.—

Brid. A great deal.

Fun. And that in a month or six weeks I may be able to prance upon a long-tail'd horse in Hyde-park, without any danger of falling?

Brid. Without doubt.

Fun. It will be vast pleasant, in the heat of the day, to canter along the King's-road, side by side, with the ladies, in the thick of the dust; but that I must not hope for this summer.

Brid. I don't know that, if you follow it close.

Fun. Never fear, I shan't be sparing of— But come, come, let us get to our business— John, have the carpenters brought home my new horse?

Enter JOHN.

John. It is here, Sir, upon the top of the stairs.

Fun. Then fetch it in, in an instant. [*Exit John.*] What a deal of time and trouble there goes, Mr. Bridoun, to the making a gentleman. And do your gentlemen born now (for I reckon you have had of all sorts) take as much pains as we do?

Brid.

THE COMMISSARY. 53

Brid. To be sure ; but they begin at an earlier age.

Fun. There is something in that ; I did not know but they might be apter, more cuterer now in catching their larning.

Brid. Dispositions do certainly differ.

Fun. Ay, ay, something in nater, I warrant, as they say the children of blackamoors will swim as soon as they come into the world.

[*Enter Servants with a wooden horse.*
Oh, here he is, Ods me ! it is a stately fine beast.

Brid. Here my lads, place it here——very well, where's your switch, Mr. Fungus ?

Fun. I have it.

Brid. Now let me see you vault nimbly into your seat. Zounds ! you are got on the wrong side, Mr. Fungus ?

Fun. I am so, indeed, but we'll soon rectify that. Now we are right : may I have leave to lay hold of the mane ?

Brid. If you can't mount him without.

Fun. I will try ; but this steed is so devilish tall——Mr. Bridoun, you don't think he'll throw me ?

Brid. Never fear.

Fun. Well, if he shou'd he can't kick, that's one comfort, however.

Brid. Now mind your position.

Fun. Stay till I recover my wind.

Brid. Let your head be erect.

Fun. There.

Brid. And your shoulders fall easily back.

Fun. Ho——there.

Brid.

Brid. Your switch perpendicular in your right hand——Your right——that is it, your left to the bridle.

Fun. There.

Brid. Your knees in, and your toes out.

Fun. There.

Brid. Are you ready ?

Fun. When you will.

Brid. Off you go.

Fun. Don't let him gallop at first.

Brid. Very well : preserve your position.

Fun. I warrant.

Brid. Does he carry you easy ?

Fun. All the world like a cradle. But, Mr. Bridoun, I go at a wonderful rate.

Brid. Mind your knees.

Fun. Ay, ay, I can't think but this here horse stands still very near as fast as another can gallop.

Brid. Mind your toes.

Fun. Ho, Stop the horse. Zounds ! I'm out of the stirrups, I can't sit him no longer ; there I go.——— [Falls off.]

Brid. I hope you ar'n't hurt ?

Fun. My left hip has a little confusion.

Brid. A trifle, quite an accident ; it might happen to the very best rider in England.

Fun. Indeed !

Brid. We have such things happen every day at the manege ; but you are vastly improv'd.

Fun. Why, I am grown bolder a little ; and, Mr. Bridoun, when do you think I may venture to ride a live horse ?

Brid.

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Brid. The very instant you are able to keep your seat on a dead one.—

Enter Mrs. MECHLIN.

Mrs. Mech. Bless me, Mr. Fungus, how you are trifling your time ! I expect lady Sacharissa every moment, and see what a trim you are in.

Fun. I beg pardon, good madam Mechlin. I'll be equipp'd in a couple of minutes ; where will her ladyship please to receive ?

Mrs. Mech. In this room, to be sure ; come, stir, stir.

Fun. I have had a little fall from my horse.— I'll go as fast as I—Mr. Bridoun, will you lend me a lift ?

[*Exeunt Fungus and Bridoun.*]

Mrs. Mech. There — Jenny, show Mrs. Loveit in here — Who's there —

Enter SERVANTS.

Pray move that piece of lumber out of the way. Come, come, make haste. Madam, if you'll step in here for a moment.

Enter Mrs. LOVEIT.

Mrs. Lov. So, so, Mrs. Mechlin ; well, you see I am true to my time ; and how have you throve, my good woman ?

Mrs. Mech. Beyond expectations.

Mrs. Lov. Indeed ! And have you provided a party ?

Mrs. Mech. Ay, and such a party, you might search the town round before you cou'd meet with

56 THE COMMISSARY.

with his fellow : he'll suit you in every respect.

Mrs. Lov. As how, as how, my dear woman?

Mrs. Mech. A gentleman by birth and by breeding, none of your little whipper snapper Jacks, but a countenance as comely, and a presence as portly ; he has one fault indeed, if you can but overlook that.

Mrs. Lov. What is it?

Mrs. Mech. His age.

Mrs. Lov. Age ! how, how?

Mrs. Mech. Why, he is rather under your mark, I am afraid ; not above twenty at most.

Mrs. Lov. Well, well, so he answers in every thing else, we must overlook that ; for, Mrs. Mechlin, there is no expecting perfection below.

Mrs. Mech. True, ma'am.

Mrs. Lov. And where is he?

Mrs. Mech. I look for him every minute ; if you will but step into the drawing-room, I have given him such a picture, that I am sure he is full as impatient as you.

Mrs. Lov. My dear woman, you are so kind and obliging : but, Mrs. Mechlin, how do I look ? don't flatter me, do you think my figure will strike him ?

Mrs. Mech. Or he must be blind.

Mrs. Lov. You may just hint black don't become me, that I am a little paler of late ; the loss of a husband one loves will cause an alteration, you know.

Mrs. Mech. True ; oh, he will make an allowance for that.

Mrs. Lov. But things will come round in a trice.

[Exit Mrs. Loveit.

Enter

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Enter SIMON.

Sim. Madam, miss Dolly is dizen'd out, and every thing ready.

Mrs. Mech. Let her wait for the commissary here, I will introduce him the instant he is dress'd. [*Exit Mrs. Mechlin.*]

Sim. Miss Dolly, you may come in, your aunt will be here in an instant.

Enter DOLLY and JENNY.

Dolly. Hush, Simon, hush, to your post.

Sim. I am gone——— [*Exit Simon.*]

Dolly. Well, Jenny, and have I the true quality air?

Jen. As perfectly, ma'am, as if you had been bred to the business; and for figure, I defy the first of them all. For my part, I think Mr. Fungus very well off; when the secret comes out I don't see what right he has to be angry.

Dolly. Oh, when once he is noos'd, let him struggle as much as he will, the cord will be drawn only the tighter.

Jen. Ay, ay, we may trust to your management. I hope, miss, I shall have the honour to follow your fortunes; there will be no bearing this house, when once you have left it.

Dolly. No, Jenny, it would be barbarous to rob my aunt of so useful a second; besides, for mistress and maid, we rather know one another a little too well.

Jen. Indeed! but here comes Mr. Fungus; remember distance and dignity.

I

Dolly.

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Dolly. I warrant you, wench.

Jen. So, I see what I have to hope. Our young filly seems to be secure of her match; but I may jostle her the wrong side the post: we will have a trial, however, but I must see and find out the brother.

Enter Z. FUNGUS, and Mrs. MECHLIN.

Fun. Yes, Scarlet is vastly becoming, and takes very much with the ladies; quite proper too, as I have been in the army.

Mrs. Mech. Stay where you are till you are announc'd to the lady. Mr. Fungus begs leave to throw himself at your ladyship's feet.

Dolly. The mon may dra nigh.

Mrs. Mech. Approach.

Fun. One, two, three, ha! Will that do?

Mrs. Mech. Pretty well.

Fun. May I begin to make love?

Mrs. Mech. When you will.

Fun. Now stand my friend, Mr. Gruel. But she has such a deal of dignity that she dashes me quite.

Mrs. Mech. Courage.

Fun. Here, hold the paper to prompt me in case I shou'd stumble—Madam, or, May it please your ladyship, When I preponderate the grandeur of your high ginnyalogy, and the mercantile meanness of my dingy descent; when I consider that your ancestors, like admiral Anson, sail'd all round the world in the ark; and that it is a matter of doubt, whether I ever had any forefathers or no; I totter, I tremble, at the thoughts

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thoughts of my towering ambition—Ah—a, is not Phaeton next?—

Mrs. Mech. Hey!—[*Looking at the paper.*] No, Luna.

Fung. Right;—ambition—dignity how debas'd, distance how great; it is as if the link shou'd demand an alliance with Luna; or the bushy-bramble court the boughs of the stately Scotch fir; it is as if—What's next?

Mrs. Mech. Next—hey!—I have lost the place I am afraid—Come, come, enough has been said; you have shew'd the sense you entertain of the honour. Upon these occasions, a third person is fittest to cut matters short. Your ladyship hears that—

Dolly. Yes, yes, I keen weel enough what the mon wou'd be at. Mrs. Mechlin has spear'd like things in your great commendations, Mr Fungus, that I cannot but say I clik'd a fancy to you from the very beginning.

Fung. Much oblig'd to Mrs. Mechlin, indeed, please your la'ship.—

Dolly. You ken I am of as auncient a family as any North Briton can boast.

Fung. I know it full well, please your la'ship.

Dolly. And that I shall get the ill-wull of a' my kin by this match.

Fung. I am sorry for that, please your la'ship.

Dolly. But after the ceremony it will be proper to withdraw from town for a short space o'time.

Fun. Please your la'ship, what your la'ship pleases.

Dolly. In order to gi that gossip, Scandal, just time to tire her tongue.

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Fun. True, your la'ship.

Dolly. I mun expect that the folk will mak' free wi' my character in choosin' like a consort as you.

Fun. And with me too, please your la'ship.

Dolly. Wi' you, mon!

Mrs. Meck. Hold your tongue.

Dolly. Donna you think the honor will dra' mickle envy upon you.

Fun. Oh, to be sure, please your la'ship. I did not mean that.

Dolly. Weel, I say we'll gang into the country.

Fun. As soon as your la'ship pleases; I have a sweet house hard by Reading.

Dolly. You ha'; that's right.

Fun. One of the most pleasantest places that can be again.

Dolly. Ha' you a good prospect?

Fun. Twenty stage-coaches drive every day by the door, besides carts and gentlemen's carriages.

Dolly. Ah, that will——

Mrs. Meck. Oh, your ladyship will find all things prepar'd: in the next room the attorney waits with the writings.

Fun. The honour of your la'ship's hand——

Dolly. Maister Fungus, you're a little too hasty. [Exit Dolly.

Mrs. Meck. Not till after the nuptials; you must not expect to be too familiar at first.

Fun. Pray, when do you think we shall bring the bedding about?

Mrs. Meck. About the latter end of the year, when the winter sets in.

Fun. Not before!

Enter

THE COMMISSARY. 61

Enter Young LOVEIT, hastily.

Y. Lov. I hope, Madam Mechlin, I have not exceeded my hour; but I expected Mr. Harpy wou'd call.

Mrs. Mech. He is in the next room with a lady. Oh, Mr. Fungus, this gentleman is ambitious of obtaining the nuptial benediction from the same hands after you.

Fun. He's heartily welcome: What, and is his wife a woman of quality too?

Mrs. Mech. No, no, a cit; but monstrously rich; but your lady will wonder——

Fun. Ay, ay, but you'll follow; for I shan't know what to say to her when we are alone.—

[Exit Fungus.]

Mrs. Mech. I will send you, Sir, your spouse in an instant: the gentlewoman is a widow, so you may throw in what raptures you please.

Y. Lov. Never fear. *[Exit Mrs. Mechlin.]*
——And yet this scene is so new, how to acquit myself—let me recollect—some piece of a play now.—“Vouchsafe divine perfection”—No, that won't do for a dowager; it is too humble and whining. But see, the door opens, so I have no time for rehearsal—I have it—
“Clasp'd in the folds of love I'll meet my doom,
“And act my”——

Enter Mrs. LOVEIT.

Mrs. Lov. Hah!

Y. Lov. By all that's monstrous, my mother!

Mrs. Lov. That rebel my son, as I live!

Y. Lov.

THE COMMISSARY.

Y. Lov. The quotation was quite a-propos : had it been a little darker, I might have reviv'd the story of *Cædipus*.

Mrs. Lov. So, Sirrah, what makes you from your studies ?

Y. Lov. A small hint I receiv'd of your inclinations brought me here, ma'am, in order to prevent, if possible, my father's fortune from going out of the family.

Mrs. Lov. Your father ! how dare you disturb his dear ashes ; you know well enough how his dear memory melts me ; and that at his very name my heart is ready to break.

Y. Lov. Well said, my old matron of *Ephesus*.

Mrs. Lov. That is what you want, you disobedient unnatural monster ; but compleat, accomplish your cruelty : send me the same road your villanies forc'd your father to take.

Enter Mrs. MECHLIN.

Mrs. Mech. Hey-day ! What the deuce have we here ; our old lady in tears !

Mrs. Lov. Disappointed a little ; that's all.

Mrs. Mech. Pray, ma'am, what can occasion—

Mrs. Lov. Lord bless me, Mrs. Mechlin, what a blunder you have made.

Mrs. Mech. A blunder ! as how ?

Mrs. Lov. Do you know who you have brought me ?

Mrs. Mech. Not perfectly.

Mrs. Lov. My own son ! that's all.

Mrs. Mech. Your son !

Mrs.

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Mrs. Lov. Ay, that rebellious, unnatural—

Mrs. Mech. Blunder indeed ! But who cou'd have thought it ; why, by your account, ma'am, I imagin'd your son was a child scarce out of his frocks.

Mrs. Lov. Here's company coming, so my reputation will be blasted for ever.

Mrs. Mech. Never fear, leave the care on't to me.

Enter FUNGUS and DOLLY.

Fun. What is the matter ; you make such a noise, there is no such thing as minding the writings.

Mrs. Mech. This worthy lady, an old friend of mine, not having set eyes on her son since the death of his father ; and being apprised by me, that here she might meet with him, came with a true paternal affection to give him a little wholesome advice.

Mrs. Lov. Well said, Mrs. Mechlin.

Mrs. Mech. Which the young man returned in a way so brutal and barbarous, that his poor mother—be comforted, ma'am ; you had better repose on my bed.

Mrs. Lov. Any where to get out of his sight.

Mrs. Mech. Here, Jenny.

Mrs. Lov. Do you think you can procure me another party.

Mrs. Mech. Never doubt it.

Mrs. Lov. Ugh, ugh— [Exit coughing.]

Mrs. Mech. Bear up a little, ma'am.

Fun. Fye upon you, you have thrown the old gentlewoman into the stericks.

T. Lov.

Y. Lov. Sir !

Fun. You a man, you are a scandal, a shame to your sect.

Enter Dr. CATGUT.

Dr. Cat. Come, come, Mrs. Mechlin, are the couple prepar'd ; the fiddles are tun'd, the bows ready rosin'd, and the whole band—Oh, you, Sir, are one party I reckon, but where is the—Ah, Dolly, what are you here, my dear ?

Dolly. Soh !

Fun. Dolly ! Who the devil can this be ?

Dr. Cat. As nice and as spruce too, the bride-maid I warrant : Why you look as blooming, you flut.

Fun. What can this be ? hark ye, Sir !

Dr. Cat. Well, Sir.

Fun. Don't you think you are rather too familiar with a lady of her rank and condition ?

Dr. Cat. Rank and condition : what, Dolly ?

Fun. Dolly ! what a plague possesses the man ; this is no Dolly, I tell you.

Dr. Cat. No !

Fun. No, this is lady Scracariffa Mackirkin-croft.

Dr. Cat. Who ?

Fun. Descended from the old, old, old earl of Glendowery.

Dr. Cat. What she, Dolly Mechlin ?

Fun. Dolly Devil, the man's out of his wits, I believe.

Enter

THE COMMISSARY. 65

Enter Mrs. MECHLIN.

Oh, Mrs. Mechlin, will you set this matter to rights?

Mrs. Mech. How, Dr. Catgut!

Fun. The strangest fellow here has danc'd upstairs, and has Dolly, Dolly, Dolly'd my lady; who the plague can he be?

Dr. Cat. Oh, a-propos, Molly Mechlin, what is this the man that is to be married? the marriage will never hold good; why he is more frantic and madder——

Fun. Mad! John fetch me the foils; I'll carte and tierce you, you scoundrel.

Enter ISAAC FUNGUS and JENNY.

I. Fun. Where's brother, it a'n't over; you be'n't marry'd, I hope.

Z. Fun. No, I believe not; why, what is the ——

I. Fun. Pretty hands you are got into! Your servant, good madam; what this is the person, I warrant; ay, how pretty the puppet is painted; do you know who she is?

Z. Fun. Who she is? without doubt.

I. Fun. No, you don't, brother Zac. only the spawn of that devil incarnate, dress'd out as——

Z. Fun. But hark ye, Isaac, are——don't be in a hurry—are you sure——

Z. Fun. Sure—the girl of the house, abhorring their scandalous project, has freely confessed the whole scheme. Jenny, stand forth, and answer boldly to what I shall ask, Is not this wench the woman's niece of the house?

K

Jen.

66 THE COMMISSARY.

Jen. I fancy she will hardly deny it.

I. Fun. And is not this mistress of yours a most profligate——

Mrs. Mech. Come, come, Master Isaac, I will save you the trouble, and cut this matter short in an instant:—well then, this girl, this Dolly, is my niece; and what then?

Z. Fun. And ar'n't you ashamed?

Y. Lev. She ashamed! I wou'd have told you, but I cou'd not get you to listen; why she brought me here to marry my mother.

Z. Fun. Marry your mother! Lord have mercy on us, what a monster! to draw a young man in to be guilty of incest. But hark ye, brother Isaac, [*they retire*]——

Dr. Cat. Gads my life, what a sweet project I have help'd to destroy; but come, Dolly, I'll piece thy broken fortunes again; thou hast a good pretty voice, I'll teach thee a thrill and a shake, perch thee amongst the boughs at one of the gardens; and then as a mistress, which, as the world goes, is a much better station than that of a wife, not the proudest of them all——

Mrs. Mech. Mistress! No, no, we have not manag'd our matters so badly. Hark ye, Mr. Commissary.

Z. Fun. Well, what do you want?

Mrs. Mech. Do you propose to consummate your nuptials?

Z. Fun. That's a pretty question, indeed.

Mrs. Mech. You have no objection then to paying the penalty, the contract here that Mr. Harpy has drawn.

Z. Fun. The contract, hey, brother Isaac.

I. Fun. Let me see it.

Mrs.

THE COMMISSARY. 67

Mrs. Mecb. Soft you there, my maker of candles, it is as well where it is ; but you need not doubt of its goodness : I promise you the best advice has been taken.

Z. Fun. What a damn'd fiend, what a harpy !

Mrs. Mecb. And why so, my good master Fungus ; is it because I have practis'd that trade by retail which you have carried on in the gross ? What injury do I do the world ? I feed on their follies, 'tis true ; and the game, the plunder, is fair ; but the fangs of you and your tribe,

A whole people have felt, and for ages wi'l feel :
To their candour and justice I make my appeal ;
Tho' a poor humble scourge in a national cause,
As I trust I deserve, I demand your applause.

F I N I S

P L A Y S

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TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
FRANCIS SEYMOUR CONWAY,
EARL OF HERTFORD,
LORD CHAMBERLAIN OF
HIS MAJESTY'S HOUSHOLD,
TO WHOSE
POLITENESS AND CANDOUR
THE AUTHOR
OWES EVERY ACKNOWLEDGMENT,
THIS COMEDY IS
GRATEFULLY DEDICATED
BY
HIS LORDSHIP'S
MOST OBLIGED
AND
MOST OBEDIENT SERVANT,

North End.

SAM. FOOTE.

ST. JOHN'S HOSPITAL
FRANCIS LYNCH

1840

1841

1842

1843

1844

1845

1846

1847

1848

1849

1850

1851

1852

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1859

1860

1861

1862

P R O L O G U E.

Written and Spoken by Mr. GENTLEMAN.

PROLOGUES, like cards of compliment, we find,
Most as unmeaning as politely kind;
To beg a favour, or to plead excuse,
Of both appears to be the gen'ral use.

Shall my words, tipt with flattery, prepare
A kind exertion of your tend'rest care?
Shall I present our Author to your sight,
A.l pale and trembling for his fate this night?
Shall I solicit the most pow'rful arms
To aid his cause—the force of beauty's charms?
Or tell each critic, his approving taste
Must give the sterling stamp, wherever plac'd?
This might be done—but so to seek applause
Argues a conscious weakness in the cause.
No—let the Muse in simple truth appear,
Reason and Nature are the judges here:
If by their strict and self-describing laws,
The several characters to-night she draws;
If from the whole a pleasing piece is made,
On the true principles of light and shade;
Struck with the harmony of just design,
Your eyes—your ears—your hearts, will all combine
To grant applause:—but if an erring hand
Gross disproportion marks in motley band,
If the group'd figures false connexions show,
And glaring colours without meaning glow,
Your wounded feelings, turn'd a diff'rent way,
Will justly damn—the abortion of a play.

As Farquhar has observ'd, our English law,
Like a fair spreading oak, the Muse should draw,
By Providence design'd, and wisdom made
For honesty to thrive beneath its shade;
Yet from its boughs some insects shelter find,
Dead to each nobler feeling of the mind,
Who thrive, alas! too well, and never cease
To prey on justice, property, and peace.

PROLOGUE.

*At such to-night, with other legal game,
Our vent'rous author takes satiric aim;
And brings, he hopes, originals to view,
Nor pilfers from th' Old Magpie, nor the New*.
But will to Candour cheerfully submit;
She reigns in boxes, galleries, and pit.*

* Alluding to Mr. Garrick's Prologue to the Jubilee.

Dramatis Personæ.

MEN.

Sir LUKE LIMP,	<i>Mr. Foote.</i>
Serjeant CIRCUIT,	<i>Mr. Vandermere.</i>
Colonel SECRET,	<i>Mr. Robson.</i>
JACK,	<i>Mr. Weston.</i>
Mr. WOODFORD,	<i>Mr. Knowles.</i>
Mr. FAIRPLAY,	<i>Mr. Wheeler.</i>
First SERVANT,	<i>Mr. Dancer.</i>
Second SERVANT,	<i>Mr. Griffiths.</i>

WOMEN.

Mrs. CIRCUIT,	<i>Mrs. Gardner.</i>
CHARLOT,	<i>Mrs. Jewell.</i>
Mrs. SIMPER,	<i>Mrs. Saunders.</i>
BETTY,	<i>Mrs. Read.</i>



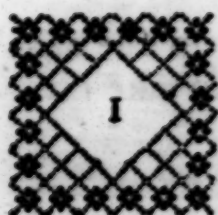
THE
LAME LOVER.



A C T I.

Enter Serjeant CIRCUIT and CHARLOT.

CHARLOT.



Tell you, Sir, his love to me is all a pretence: it is amazing that you, who are so acute, so quick in discerning on other occasions, should be so blind upon this.

SERJEANT.

But where are your proofs, Charlot? What signifies your opening matters which your evidence cannot support?

CHARLOT.

Surely, Sir, strong circumstances in every court should have weight.

B

SER.

2 THE LAME LOVER.

SERJEANT.

So they have collaterally, child, that is by way as it were of corroboration, or where matters are doubtful; then indeed, as Plowden wisely, observes "Les circonstances ajout beaucoup de poids aux faits."—You understand me?

CHARLOT.

Not perfectly well.

SERJEANT.

Then to explain by case in point; A, we will suppose, my dear, robs B of a watch upon Hounslow heath—dy'e mind, child?

CHARLOT.

I do, Sir.

SERJEANT.

A, is taken up and indicted; B swears positively to the identity of A.—Dy'e observe?

CHARLOT.

Attentively.

SERJEANT.

Then what does me A, but sets up the alibi C, to defeat the affidavit of B.—You take me.

CHARLOT.

Clearly.

SERJEANT.

So far you see then the ballance is even.

CHARLOT.

True.

SERJEANT.

But then to turn the scale, child, against A, in favour of B, they produce the circumstance D, viz. B's watch found in the pocket of A; upon which

THE LAME LOVER. 3

which, the testimony of C being contradicted by B,—no, by D,—why then A, that is to say C,—no D,—joining B, they convict C,—no, no, A,—against the affidavit of C.—So this being pretty clear, child, I leave the application to you.

CHARLOT.

Very obliging, Sir. But suppose now, Sir, it should appear that the attention of Sir Luke Limp is directed to some other object, would not that induce you to—

SERGEANT.

Other object! Where?

CHARLOT.

In this very house.

SERGEANT.

Here! why the girl is non compos; there's nobody here, child, but a parcel of Abigals.

CHARLOT.

No, Sir?

SERGEANT.

No.

CHARLOT.

Yes, Sir, one person else.

SERGEANT.

Who is that?

CHARLOT.

But remember, Sir, my accusation is confined to Sir Luke.

SERGEANT.

Well, well.

B 2

CHAR-

4 THE LAME LOVER.

CHARLOT.

Suppose then, Sir, those powerful charms which made a conquest of you, may have extended their empire over the heart of Sir Luke?

SERGEANT.

Why, huffy, you don't hint at your mother-in-law?

CHARLOT.

Indeed, Sir, but I do.

SERGEANT.

Ay; why this is point blank treason against my sovereign authority: but can you, Charlot, bring proof of any overt acts?

CHARLOT

Overt acts!

SERGEANT.

Ay; that is any declaration by writing, or even word of mouth is sufficient; then let 'em demur if they dare.

CHARLOT.

I can't say that, Sir; but another organ has been pretty explicit.

SERGEANT.

Which?

CHARLOT.

In those cases a very infallible one—the eye.

SERGEANT.

Pshaw! nonsense and stuff.—The eye!—The eye has no authority in a court of law.

CHARLOT.

Perhaps not, Sir; but it is a decisive evidence in a court of love.

THE LAME LOVER. 5

SERJEANT.

Hark you, huffy, why you would not file an information against the virtue of madam your mother; you would not insinuate that she has been guilty of crim. con.?

CHARLOT.

Sir, you mistake me; it is not the lady, but the gentleman I am about to impeach.

SERJEANT.

Have a care, Charlot! I see on what ground your action is founded—jealousy.

CHARLOT.

You were never more deceiv'd in your life; for it is impossible, my dear Sir, that jealousy can subsist without love.

SERJEANT.

Well.

CHARLOT.

And from that passion (thank heaven) I am pretty free at present.

SERJEANT.

Indeed!

CHARLOT.

A sweet object to excite tender desires!

SERJEANT.

And why not, huffy?

CHARLOT.

First as to his years.

SERJEANT.

What then?

CHAR-

6 THE LAME LOVER.

CHARLOT.

I own, Sir, age procures honor, but I believe
it is very rarely productive of love.

SERGEANT.

Mighty well.

CHARLOT.

And tho' the loss of a leg can't be imputed to
Sir Luke Limp as a fault—

SERGEANT.

How!

CHARLOT.

I hope, Sir, at least you will allow it a misfor-
tune.

SERGEANT.

Indeed!

CHARLOT.

A pretty thing truly, for a girl, at my time of
life, to be ty'd to a man with one foot in the
grave.

SERGEANT.

One foot in the grave! the rest of his body is
not a whit the nearer for that.—There has been
only an execution issued against part of his per-
sonals, his real estate is unencumbered and free
—besides, you see he does not mind it a whit,
but is as alert, and as merry, as a defendant after
non-suiting a plaintiff for omitting an S.

CHARLOT.

O! Sir! I know how proud Sir Luke is of his
leg, and have often heard him declare, that he
would not change his bit of timber for the best
flesh and bone in the kingdom.

SER-

THE LAME LOVER. 7

SERJEANT.

There's a hero for you !

CHARLOT.

To be sure, sustaining unavoidable evils with constancy is a certain sign of greatness of mind.

SERJEANT.

Doubtless.

CHARLOT.

But then to derive a vanity from a misfortune, will not I'm afraid be admitted as a vast instance of wisdom, and indeed looks as if the man had nothing better to distinguish himself by.

SERJEANT.

How does that follow ?

CHARLOT.

By inunendo.

SERJEANT.

Negatur.

CHARLOT.

Besides, Sir, I have other proofs of your hero's vanity, not inferior to that I have mention'd.

SERJEANT.

Cite them.

CHARLOT.

The paltry ambition of levying and following titles.

SERJEANT.

Titles ! I don't understand you ?

CHARLOT.

I mean the poverty of fastening in public upon men of distinction, for no other reason but be-
cause

3 THE LAME LOVER.

cause of their rank; adhering to Sir John till the Baronet is superceded by my Lord; quitting the puny Peer for an Earl; and sacrificing all three to a Duke.

SERJEANT.

Keeping good company! a laudable ambition!

CHARLOT.

True, Sir, if the virtues that procur'd the father a peerage, could with that be entail'd on the son.

SERJEANT.

Have a care, huffy—there are severe laws against speaking evil of dignities.—

CHARLOT.

Sir!

SERJEANT.

Scandalum magnatum is a statute must not be trifled with: why you are not one of those vulgar fluts that think a man the worse for being a Lord?

CHARLOT.

No, Sir; I am contented with only, not thinking him the better.

SERJEANT.

For all this, I believe, huffy, a right honourable proposal would soon make you alter your mind.

CHARLOT.

Not unless the proposer had other qualities than what he possesses by patent. Besides, Sir, you know Sir Luke is a devotee to the bottle.

SERJEANT.

Not a whit the less honest for that.

CHAR-

THE LAME LOVER. 9

CHARLOT.

It occasions one evil at least ; that when under its influence, he generally reveals all, sometimes more than he knows.

SERGEANT.

Proofs of an open temper, you baggage : but, come, come, all these are but trifling objections.

CHARLOT.

You mean, Sir, they prove the object a trifle.

SERGEANT.

Why you pett jade, do you play on my words? I say Sir Luke is—

CHARLOT.

Nobody.

SERGEANT.

Nobody ! how the deuce do you make that out?—He is neither person attained or outlaw'd, may in any of his majesty's courts sue or be sued, appear by attorney, or in propria persona, can acquire, buy, procure, purchase, possess, and inherit, not only personalities, such as goods, and chattels, but even realities, as all lands, tenements, and hereditaments, whatsoever, and wheresoever.

CHARLOT.

But, Sir—

SERGEANT.

Nay, further child, he may sell, give, bestow, bequeath, devise, demise, lease, or to farm lett, ditto lands, to any person whomsoever — and —

C

CHAR-

10 THE LAME LOVER.

CHARLOT.

Without doubt, Sir; but there are notwithstanding in this town a great number of nobodies, not described by lord Coke.

SERGEANT.

Hey!

CHARLOT.

There is your next-door neighbour, Sir Harry Hen, an absolute blank.

SERGEANT.

How so, Mrs. Pert?

CHARLOT.

What, Sir! a man who is not suffer'd to hear, see, smell, or in short to enjoy the free use of any one of his senses; who, instead of having a positive will of his own, is deny'd even a paltry negative; who can neither resolve or reply, consent or deny, without first obtaining the leave of his lady: an absolute monarch to sink into the sneaking state of being a slave to one of his subjects—Oh fye!

SERGEANT.

Why, to be sure, Sir Harry Hen, is as I may say—

CHARLOT.

Nobody Sir, in the fullest sense of the word—Then your client Lord Solo.

SERGEANT.

Heyday!—Why you would not annihilate a peer of the realm, with a prodigious estate and an allow'd judge too of the elegant arts.

CHAR-

THE LAME LOVER. 11

CHARLOT.

O yes, Sir, I am no stranger to that nobleman's attributes ; but then, Sir, please to consider, his power as a peer he gives up to a proxy ; the direction of his estate, to a rapacious, artful attorney : and as to his skill in the elegant arts, I presume you confine them to painting and music, he is directed in the first by Mynheer Van Eisel, a Dutch dauber ; and in the last is but the echo of Signora Florenza, his lordship's mistress and an opera singer.

SERGEANT.

Mercy upon us ! at what a rate the jade runs !

CHARLOT.

In short, Sir, I define every individual who, ceasing to act for himself, becomes the tool, the mere engine of another man's will, to be nothing more than a cypher.

SERGEANT.

At this rate the jade will half unpeople the world : but what is all this to Sir Luke ? to him, not one of your cases apply.

CHARLOT.

Every one—Sir Luke has not a first principle in his whole composition ; not only his pleasures, but even his passions are prompted by others ; and he is as much directed to the objects of his love and his hatred, as in his eating, drinking, and dressing. Nay, though he is active, and eternally busy, yet his own private affairs are neglected ; and he would not scruple to break an appointment that was to determine a considerable part of his property, in order to

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exchange a couple of hounds for a lord, or to buy a pad-nag for a lady. In a word—but he's at hand, and will explain himself best; I hear his stump on the stairs.

S E R J E A N T.

I hope you will preserve a little decency before your lover at least.

C H A R L O T.

Lover! ha, ha, ha!

Enter Sir LUKE LIMP.

Sir L U K E.

Mr. Serjeant, your slave—Ah! are you there my little—O Lord! Miss, let me tell you something for fear of forgetting—Do you know that you are new christen'd, and have had me for a gossip?

C H A R L O T.

Christen'd! I don't understand you.

Sir L U K E.

Then lend me your ear—Why last night, as Colonel Kill'em, Sir William Weezy, Lord Frederick Foretop, and I were carelessly sliding the Ranelagh round, picking our teeth, after a damn'd muzzy dinner at Boodle's, who should trip by but an abbess, well known about town, with a smart little nun in her suite. Says Weezy (who, between ourselves, is as husky as hell) Who is that? odds flesh, she's a delicate wench! Zounds! cried Lord Frederick, where can Weezy have been, not to have seen the Harietta before? for you must know Frederick is a bit of Macaroni, and adores the soft Italian termination in a.

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CHARLOT.

He does?

Sir LUKE.

Yes, a delitanti all over.—Before? replied Weezy; crush me if ever I saw any thing half so handsome before!—No! replied I in an instant; Colonel, what will Weezy say when he sees the Charlotta?—Hey! you little—

CHARLOT.

② Meaning me, I presume.

Sir LUKE.

Without doubt; and you have been toasted by that name ever since.

SERGEANT.

What a vast fund of spirits he has!

Sir LUKE.

And why not, my old splitter of causes?

SERGEANT.

I was just telling Charlot, that you was not a whit the worse for the loss.

Sir LUKE.

The worse! much the better, my dear. Consider, I can have neither strain, splint, spavin, or gout; have no fear of corns, kibes, or that another man should kick my shins, or tread on my toes.

SERGEANT.

Right.

Sir LUKE.

What d'ye think I would change with Bill Spindle for one of his drumsticks, or chop with Lord Lumber for both of his logs?

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SERJEANT.

No!

Sir LUKE.

No, damn it, I am much better.—Look there—Ha!—What is there I am not able to do? To be sure I am a little awkward at running; but then, to make me amends, I'll hop with any man in town for his sum.

SERJEANT.

Ay, and I'll go his halves. ③

Sir LUKE.

Then as to your dancing, I am cut out at Madam Cornelly's, I grant, because of the croud; but as far as a private set of six couple, or moving a chair-minuet, match me who can.

CHARLOT.

A chair-minuet! I don't understand you.

Sir LUKE.

Why, child, all grace is confined to the motion of the head, arms, and chest, which may fitting be as fully displayed, as if one had as many legs as a polypus.—As thus—tol de rol—don't you see?

SERJEANT.

Very plain.

Sir LUKE.

A leg! a redundancy! a mere nothing at all. Man is from nature an extravagant creature. In my opinion, we might all be full as well as we are, with but half the things that we have.

CHARLOT.

Ay, Sir Luke; how do you prove that?

Sir

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Sir L U K E.

By constant experience.—You must have seen the man who makes and uses pens without hands,

S E R J E A N T.

I have.

Sir L U K E.

And not a twelvemonth ago, I lost my way in a fog, at Mile-End, and was conducted to my house in May-Fair by a man as blind as a beetle.

S E R J E A N T.

Wonderful!

Sir L U K E.

And as to hearing and speaking, those organs are of no manner of use in the world.

S E R J E A N T.

How!

Sir L U K E.

If you doubt it, I will introduce you to a whole family, dumb as oysters, and deaf as the dead, who chatter from morning till night by only the help of their fingers.

S E R J E A N T.

Why, Charlot, these are cases in point.

Sir L U K E.

Oh! clear as a trout-stream; and it is not only, my little Charlot, that this piece of timber answers every purpose, but it has procured me many a bit of fun in my time.

S E R J E A N T.

Ay!

Sir

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Sir L U K E.

Why, it was but last summer, at Tunbridge; we were plagued the whole season by a bullet-headed Swiss from the canton of Bern, who was always boasting, what, and how much he dared do; and then, as to pain, no Stoic, not Diogenes, held it more in contempt.—By gods, he was no more minds it dan notings at all—So, foregad, I gave my German a challenge.

S E R J E A N T.

As how!—Mind, Charlot.

Sir L U K E.

Why to drive a corkin pin into the calves of our legs.

S E R J E A N T.

Well, well.

Sir L U K E.

Mine, you may imagine, was easily done—but when it came to the Baron—

S E R J E A N T.

Ay, ay.

Sir L U K E.

Our modern Cato soon lost his coolness and courage, screw'd his nose up to his foretop, rapp'd out a dozen oaths in high Dutch, limp'd away to his lodgings, and was there laid up for a month—Ha, ha, ha!

Enter a Servant, and delivers a Card to Sir Luke.

Sir L U K E *reads.*

“ Sir Gregory Goose desires the honour of
“ Sir Luke Limp's company to dine. An an-
“ swer

THE LAME LOVER. 17

"swer is desired." Gadso! a little unlucky;
I have been engag'd for these three weeks.

SERJEANT.

What, I find Sir Gregory is return'd for the
corporation of *Pleesum*.

Sir LUKE.

Is he so? Oh ho!—That alters the case.—
George, give my compliments to Sir Gregory,
and I'll certainly come and dine there. Order
Joe to run to alderman Inkle's, in Threadneedle-
street; sorry can't wait upon him, but confin'd
to bed two days with *new influenza*.

CHARLOT.

You make light, Sir Luke, of these sort of
engagements.

Sir LUKE.

What can a man do? These damn'd fel-
lows (when one has the misfortune to meet
them) take scandalous advantage; teaze, When
will you do me the honour, pray, Sir Luke, to
take a bit of mutton with me? Do you name
the day.—They are as bad as a beggar, who
attacks your coach at the mounting of a hill;
there is no getting rid of them, without a penny
to one, and a promise to t'other.

SERJEANT.

True; and then for such a time too—three
weeks! I wonder they expect folks to remem-
ber. It is like a retainer in Michaelmas term
for the summer affizes.

Sir LUKE.

Not but, upon these occasions, no man in
England is more punctual than——

D

Enter

18 THE LAME LOVER.

Enter a Servant, who gives Sir Luke a Letter.

From whom?

SERVANT.

Earl of Brentford. The servant waits for an answer.

Sir L U K E.

Answer!—By your leave, Mr. Serjeant and Charlot. [*Reads.*] “Taste for music—Mons. “Duport—fail—Dinner upon table at five”—Gadso! I hope Sir Gregory’s servant an’t gone.

SERVANT.

Immediately upon receiving the answer.

Sir L U K E.

Run after him as fast as you can—tell him, quite in despair—recollect an engagement that can’t in nature be missed,—and return in an instant.

CHARLOT.

You see, Sir, the Knight must give way for my Lord.

Sir L U K E.

No, faith, it is not that, my dear Charlot; you saw that was quite an extempore business.—No, hang it, no, it is not for the title; but to tell you the truth, Brentford has more wit than any man in the world; it is that makes me fond of his house.

CHARLOT.

By the choice of his company he gives an unanswerable instance of that.

Sir

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Sir L U K E.

You are right, my dear girl. But now to give you a proof of his wit : You know Brentford's finances are a little out of repair, which procures him some visits that he would very gladly excuse.

S E R J E A N T.

What need he fear ? His person is sacred ; for by the tenth of William and Mary—

Sir L U K E.

He knows that well enough ; but for all that—

S E R J E A N T.

Indeed, by a late act of his own house, (which does them infinite honour) his goods or chattels may be——

Sir L U K E.

Seiz'd upon when they can find them ; but he lives in ready-furnish'd lodgings, and hires his coach by the month.

S E R J E A N T.

Nay, if the sheriff return “non inventus”—

Sir L U K E.

A pox o'your law, you make me lose sight of my story. One morning, a Welch coach-maker came with his bill to my Lord, whose name was unluckily Loyd. My Lord had the man up. You are call'd, I think, Mr. Loyd ?—At your Lordship's service, my Lord.—What, Loyd with an L ?—It was with an L indeed, my Lord.—Because in your part of the world I have heard that Loyd and Floyd were

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synonymous, the very same names.—Very often indeed, my lord.—But you always spell your's with an L?—Always.—That, Mr. Loyd, is a little unlucky; for you must know I am now paying my debts alphabetically, and in four or five years you might have come in with an F; but I am afraid I can give you no hopes for your L.—Ha, ha, ha!

Enter a SERVANT.

SERVANT.

There was no overtaking the servant.

Sir LUKE.

That is unlucky: tell my Lord I'll attend him.—I'll call on Sir Gregory myself.

SERGEANT.

Why, you won't leave us, Sir Luke?

Sir LUKE.

Pardon, dear Serjeant and Charlotta; have a thousand things to do for half a million of people positively; promised to procure a husband for Lady Cicely Sulky, and match a coach-horse for Brigadier Whip; after that, must run into the city to borrow a thousand for young At-all at Almack's; send a Cheshire cheese by the stage to Sir Timothy Tankard in Suffolk; and get at the Herald's Office a coat of arms to clap on the coach of Billy Bengal, a nabob newly arriv'd: so you see I have not a moment to lose.

SERGEANT.

True, true.

Sir

THE LAME LOVER. 21

Sir LUKE.

At your toilet to-morrow at ten you may—

Enter a SERVANT abruptly, and runs against
Sir LUKE.

Can't you see where you are running, you rascal!

SERVANT.

Sir, his grace the Duke of—

Sir LUKE.

Grace!—Where is he?—Where—

SERVANT.

In his coach at the door.—If you an't better engaged would be glad of your company to go into the city, and take a dinner at Dolly's.

Sir LUKE.

In his own coach did you say?

SERVANT.

Yes, Sir.

Sir LUKE.

With the coronets—or—

SERVANT.

I believe so.

Sir LUKE.

There's no resisting of that.—Bid Joe run to Sir Gregory Goose's.

SERVANT.

He is already gone to alderman Inkle's

Sir LUKE.

Then do you step to the Knight—hey!—no—
you must go to my Lord's—hold, hold, no—I
I have

22 THE LAME LOVER.

have it—Step first to Sir Greg's, then pop in at Lord Brentford's just as the company are going to dinner.

SERVANT.

What shall I say to Sir Gregory?

Sir LUKE.

Any thing—what I told you before.

SERVANT.

And what to my Lord?

Sir LUKE.

What!—Why tell him that my uncle from Epsom—no—that won't do, for he knows I don't care a farthing for him—hey!—Why tell him—hold I have it—Tell him, that as I was going into my chair to obey his commands, I was arrested by a couple of bailiffs, forced into a hackney coach, and carried to the Py'd Bull in the Borough; I beg ten thousand pardons for making his grace wait, but his grace knows my misfor—
[Exit Sir Luke.]

CHARLOT.

Well, Sir, what dy'e think of the proofs? I flatter myself I have pretty well established my case.

SERGEANT.

Why, huffy, you have hit upon points; but then they are but trifling flaws, they don't vitiate the title, that stands unimpeach'd; and—
But, madam, your mother.

Enter

THE LAME LOVER. 23

Enter Mrs. CIRCUIT.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

What have you done with the Knight?—Why you have not let him depart?

CHARLOT.

It was not in my power to keep him.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

I don't wonder at that; but what took him away?

CHARLOT.

What will at any time take him away—a Duke at the door.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

Are you certain of that?

SERGEANT.

Why truly, chuck, his retreat was rather precipitate for a man that is just going to be marry'd.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

The prospect of marriage does not always prove the strongest attachment.

SERGEANT.

Pardon me, lovee; the law allows no higher consideration than marriage.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

Pshaw!

SERGEANT.

Infomuch, that if duke A was to intermarry with chambermaid B, difference of condition would prove no bar to the settlement.

Mrs.

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Mrs. CIRCUIT.

Indeed!

SERJEANT.

Ay; and this was held to be law by Chief-baron Bind'em, on the famous case of the Marquis of Cully, and Fanny Flip-flap the French dancer.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

The greater blockhead the Baron: but don't pester me with your odious law cases.—Did not you tell me you was to go to Kingston to day to try the crown causes?

SERJEANT.

I was begg'd to attend for fear his Lordship should not be able to sit; but if it proves inconvenient to you—

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

To me! Oh, by no means in the world; I am too good a subject to desire the least delay in the law's execution: and when d'ye set out?

SERJEANT.

Between one and two; I shall only just give a law lecture to Jack.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

Lord! I wonder Mr. Circuit you would breed that boy up to the bar.

SERJEANT.

Why not, chuck? He has fine steady parts, and for his time moots a point—

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

Steady! stupid you mean: nothing sure cou'd add to his heaviness but the being loaded with law. Why don't you put him into the army?

SER-

THE LAME LOVER. 25

SERJEANT.

Nay, chuck, if you choose it, I believe I have interest to get Jack a commission.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

Why, Mr. Circuit, you know he is no son of mine; perhaps a cockade may animate the lad with some fire.

SERJEANT.

True, lovee; and a knowledge of the law mayn't be amiss to restrain his fire a little.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

I believe there is very little danger of his exceeding that way.

SERJEANT.

Charlot, send hither your brother.

[Exit Charlot.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

I'll not interrupt you

SERJEANT.

Far from it, lovee; I should be glad to have you a witness of Jacky's improvement.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

Of that I am no judge; besides, I am full of business to day—There is to be a ballot at one for the *Ladies' Club* lately established, and lady Bab Basso has proposed me for a member.—Pray, my dear, when will you let me have that money to pay my Lord Loo?

SERJEANT.

The three hundred you mean?

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

And besides, there is my debt to Kitty Cribbidge; I protest I almost blush whenever I meet them.

E

SER-

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SERJEANT.

Why really, lovee, 'tis a large sum of money.—Now, were I worthy to throw in a little advice, we might make a pretty good hand of this business.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

I don't understand you.

SERJEANT.

Bring an action against them on the statute, in the name of my clerk; and so not only rescue the *debt* from their hands, but recover likewise considerable *damages*.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

A pretty conceit, Mr. Serjeant! but does it not occur to your wisdom, that as I have (by the help of Captain Cog) been oftener a winner than loser, the tables may be turned upon us?

SERJEANT.

No, no, chuck, that did not escape me; I have provided for that.—Do you know, by the law, both parties are equally culpable; so that, lovee, we shall be able to fleece your friends not only of what they have *won* of poor dearee, but likewise for what they have *lost*.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

Why, what a paltry, pettifogging puppy art thou!—And could you suppose that I would submit to the scandalous office?

SERJEANT.

Scandalous! I don't understand this strange perversion of words. The scandal lies in *breaking* the laws, not in bringing the offenders to *justice*.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

Mean-spirited wretch!—What, do you suppose

THE LAME LOVER. 27

pose that those laws could be level'd against people of their high rank and condition? Can it be thought that any set of men would submit to lay legal restraints on *themselves*?—Absurd and preposterous!

SERJEANT.

Why, by their public practice, my love, one would suspect that they thought themselves excepted by a particular clause.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

Oh! to be sure; not the least doubt can be made.

SERJEANT.

True, chuck—But then your great friends should never complain of highwaymen stopping their coaches, or thieves breaking into their houses.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

Why, what has that to do with the business?

SERJEANT.

Oh! the natural consequence, love; for whilst the superiors are throwing away their fortunes, and consequently their independence *above*—you can't think but their domestics are following their examples *below*.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

Well, and what then?

SERJEANT.

Then! the same distress that throws the master and mistress into the power of any who are willing to purchase them, by a regular gradation, seduces the servants to actions, though more *criminal*, perhaps not more *atrocious*.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

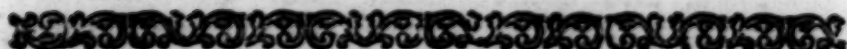
Pshaw! stuff!—I have no head to examine
E 2 your

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your dirty distinctions—Don't teize me with your jargon.—I have told you the sums I shall want, so take care they are ready at your returning from Kingston.—Nay, don't hesitate; recollect your own state of the case, and remember, my honour is in pawn, and must, some way or other, be redeem'd by the end of the week. [*Exit.*]

SERJEANT *solus.*

My honour is in pawn!—Good Lord! how a century will alter the meaning of words!—Formerly, *chastity* was the honour of women, and *good faith* and *integrity* the honour of men: but *now*, a lady who ruins her family by punctually paying her losses at play, and a gentleman who kills his best friend in some trifling frivolous quarrel, are your only tip-top people of *honour*. Well, let them go on, it brings grist to our mill: for whilst both the sexes stick firm to their *honour*, we shall never want business, either at Doctor's Commons, or the Old Bailey. [*Exit.*]



A C T II.

Enter SERJEANT CIRCUIT and JACK.

SERJEANT.

JACK, let Will bring the chaise to the door.

JACK.

Mr. Fairplay, Sir, the attorney, begs to speak a few words.

SER-

THE LAME LOVER. 29

SERJEANT.

How often have I told you, that I will see none of these sort of folks but at chambers; you know how angry your mother is at their rapping, and littering the house.

JACK.

He says, Sir, he will not detain you five minutes.

SERJEANT.

Well, bid him walk in.

Enter FAIRPLAY.

Well, Mr. Fairplay, what's your will?

FAIRPLAY.

I just call'd, Mr. Serjeant, to know your opinion upon the case of young Woodford, and if you like the proposal of being concern'd.

SERJEANT.

If it turns out as you state it, and that the father of the lad was really a minor, the Essex estate may without doubt be recover'd; and so may the lands in the North.

FAIRPLAY.

We have full proofs to that fact.

SERJEANT.

May be so; but really Mr. Fairplay, you know the length of time that these kind of suits—

FAIRPLAY.

True Sir, but then your experience will shorten I appreh—

SERJEANT.

That's more than I know: and then not only my fees lying dormant, but, perhaps, an expectation of money advanc'd.

FAIR-

30 THE LAME LOVER.

FAIRPLAY.

The property, Sir, is of very great value, and, upon the recovery, any acknowledgment shall be readily made.

SERJEANT.

There again, *any*! do you know that in law, that word *any* has no meaning at all? besides, when people are in distress, they are lavish enough of their offers; but when their business is done, then we have nothing but grumbling and grudging.

FAIRPLAY.

You have only to dictate your terms.

SERJEANT.

Does the lad live in town?

FAIRPLAY.

He has been under my care since the death of his father; I have given him as good an education as my narrow fortune would let me; he is now studying the law in the Temple, in hopes that should he fail of other assistance, he may be able one day to do *himself* justice.

SERJEANT.

In the Temple?

FAIRPLAY.

Yes, Sir, in those little chambers just over your head—I fancy the young gentleman knows him.

JACK.

Who? Mr. Woodford! Lord as well as myself, he is a sweet sober youth, and will one day make a vast figure, I am sure.

SERJEANT.

Indeed!

JACK.

I am positive, Sir, if you were to hear him
speak

THE LAME LOVER. 31

Speak at the Robinhood in the Butcher-row, you would say to yourself: why he is now reckon'd the third; except the breeches-maker from Barbican, and Sawny Sinclair the snuffman, there is not a mortal can touch him.

SERJEANT.

Peace, puppy; well Mr. Fairplay, leave the papers a little longer with me and—pray who is employ'd against you?

FAIRPLAY.

A city attorney, one Sheepskin.

SERJEANT.

A cunning fellow, I know him; well, Sir, if you will call at Pump-court in a week.

FAIRPLAY.

I shall attend you.

SERJEANT.

Jack, open the door for Mr.—[*Exeunt Fairplay and Jack.*] Something may be made of this matter: I'll see this Sheepskin myself. So much in future for carrying on the suit, or so much in hand to make it miscarry: a wise man should well weigh which party to take for.

Enter Jack.

So, Jack, any body at chambers to day?

JACK.

Fieri Facias from Fetter-lane, about the bill to be filed by Kit Crape against Will Vizard, this term.

SERJEANT.

Praying for an equal partition of plunder?

JACK.

Yes, Sir.

SER-

32 THE LAME LOVER.

SERJEANT.

Strange world we live in, that even highway-men can't be true to each other! [*half aside to himself.*] but we shall make master Vizard refund, we'll shew him what long hands the law has.

JACK.

Facias says, that in all the books he can't hit on a precedent.

SERJEANT.

Then I'll make one myself; *aut inveniam, aut faciam*, has been always my motto. The charge must be made for partnership-profit, by bartering lead and gunpowder, against money, watches, and rings, on Epping-forest, Hounslow-heath, and other parts of the kingdom.

JACK.

He says, if the court should get scent of the scheme, the parties would all stand committed.

SERJEANT.

Cowardly rascal! but however, the caution mayn't prove amiss. [*Aside.*] I'll not put my own name to the bill.

JACK.

The declaration too is deliver'd in the cause of Roger Rapp'em against Sir Solomon Simple.

SERJEANT.

What, the affair of the note?

JACK.

Yes.

SERJEANT.

Why he is clear that his client never gave such a note.

JACK.

Defendant never saw plaintiff since the hour he was born; but, notwithstanding, they have
three

THE LAME LOVER. 33

three witnesses to prove a consideration, and signing the note.

SERJEANT.

They have?

JACK.

He is puzzled what plea to put in.

SERJEANT.

Three witnesses ready, you say?

JACK.

Yes.

SERJEANT.

Tell him Simple must acknowledge the note, [Jack starts] and bid him, against the trial comes on, to procure *four* persons at least to prove the payment, at the Crown and Anchor, the 10th of December.

JACK.

But then how comes the note to remain in plaintiff's possession?

SERJEANT.

Well put, Jack; but we have a *salvo* for that, plaintiff happen'd not to have the note in his pocket, but promis'd to deliver it up, when call'd thereunto by defendant.

JACK.

That will do rarely.

SERJEANT.

Let the defence be a secret, for I see we have able people to deal with. But come, child, not to lose time, have you carefully conn'd those instructions I gave you?

JACK.

Yes, Sir.

F

SER-

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SERGEANT.

Well, that we shall see. How many points are the great object of practice?

JACK.

Two.

SERGEANT.

Which are they?

JACK.

The first is to put a man into possession of what is his right.

SERGEANT.

The second?

JACK.

Either to deprive a man of what is *really* his right, or to keep him as long as possible *out* of possession.

SERGEANT.

Good boy! To gain the last end, what are the best means to be us'd?

JACK.

Various and many are the legal modes of delay.

SERGEANT.

Name them.

JACK.

Injunctions, demurrers, sham-pleas, writs of error, rejoinders, sur-rejoinders, rebutters, sur-rebutters, replications, exceptions, essoigns, and imparlance.

SERGEANT.

[*To himself.*] Fine instruments in the hands of a man, who knows how to use them.—But now, Jack, we come to the point: if an able advocate has his choice in a cause, (which if he is in reputation he may readily have,) which side should he choose, the right, or the wrong?

JACK.

A great lawyer's business, is always to make choice of the wrong.

SERGEANT.

And prythee why so?

JACK.

Because a good cause can speak for itself, whilst a bad one demands an able counsellor to give it a colour.

SERGEANT.

Very well. But in what respects will this answer to the lawyer himself?

JACK.

In a two-fold way; firstly, his fees will be large in proportion to the dirty work he is to do.

SERGEANT.

Secondly?—

JACK.

His reputation will rise, by obtaining the victory in a desperate cause.

SERGEANT.

Right, boy. — Are you ready in the case of the cow?

JACK.

Pretty well, I believe.

SERGEANT.

Give it then.

JACK.

First of April, anno seventeen hundred and blank, John a Nokes was indicted by blank, before blank, in the county of blank, for stealing a cow, contra pacem etcet.—and against the statute in that case provided and made, to prevent stealing of cattle.

F 2.

SER.

36 THE LAME LOVER.

S E R J E A N T.

Go on.

J A C K.

Said Nokes was convicted upon the said statute.

S E R J E A N T.

What follow'd upon?—

J A C K.

Motion in arrest of judgment, made by counsellor Puzzle. First, Because the field from whence the cow was convey'd is laid in the indictment as *round*, but turn'd out upon proof to be *square*.

S E R J E A N T.

That's well : a valid objection.

J A C K.

Secondly, Because in said indictment the colour of the cow is called red, there being no such things in *rerum natura* as red cows, no more than black lions, spread eagles, flying griffins, or blue boars.

S E R J E A N T.

Well put.

J A C K.

Thirdly, said Nokes has not offended against form of the statute ; because stealing of *cattle* is there provided against : whereas we are only convicted of stealing a *cow*. Now, though cattle may be cows, yet it does by no means follow that cows must be cattle.

S E R J E A N T.

Bravo, bravo ! buss me, you rogue ; you are your father's own son ! go on, and prosper.—I am sorry, dear Jack, I must leave thee. If Providence but sends thee life and health, I prophesy, thou wilt wrest as much land from the owners,

THE LAME LOVER. 37

owners, and save as many thieves from the gallows, as any practitioner since the days of king Alfred.

JACK.

I'll do my endeavour. *[Exit Serjeant.]*
So!—father is set off. Now if I can but lay eyes on our Charlot, just to deliver this letter, before madam comes home. There she is.—
Hift, sifter Charlot!

Enter CHARLOT.

CHARLOT.

What have you got there, Jack?

JACK.

Something for you, sifter.

CHARLOT.

For me! Prythee what is it?

JACK.

A thing.

CHARLOT.

What thing?

JACK.

A thing that will please you I'm sure.

CHARLOT.

Come, don't be a boy, let me have it. *[Jack gives the letter.]* How's this! a letter! from whom?

JACK.

Can't you guess?

CHARLOT.

Not I; I don't know the hand.

JACK.

May be not; but you know the inditer.

CHARLOT.

Then tell me his name.

JACK.

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JACK.

Break open the seal, and you'll find it.

CHARLOT.

[Opening the letter] "Charles Woodford!"—
I am sure I know nothing of him.

JACK.

Ay, but sister you do.

CHARLOT.

How! when, and where?

JACK.

Don't you remember about three weeks ago,
when you drank tea at our chambers, there
was a young gentleman in a blue fatten waist-
coat, who wore his own head of hair?

CHARLOT.

Well?

JACK.

That letter's from he.

CHARLOT.

What can be his business with me?

JACK.

Read that, and you'll know.

CHARLOT reads.

"Want words to apologize—hum, hum—
"very first moment I saw you—hum, hum—
"smother'd long in my breast—hum, hum—
"happiest, or else the most wretched of men."
—So, Sir, you have undertaken a pretty com-
mission! and what do you think my father
will—

JACK.

Why, I hope you won't go for to tell him.

CHARLOT.

Indeed, Sir, but I shall.

JACK.

THE LAME LOVER. 39

JACK.

No, sister, I'm sure you won't be so cross. Besides, what could I do? The poor young lad begg'd so hard; and there for this fortnight he has gone about sighing, and musing, and moping: I am satisfied it would melt you to see him. Do, sister, let me bring him this evening, now father is out.

CHARLOT.

Upon my word!—The young man has made no bad choice of an agent; you are for pushing matters at once.—But harkee, Sir, who is this spark you are so anxious about? And how long have you known him?

JACK.

Oh! a prodigious long while: above a month I am certain. Don't you think him mighty genteel? I assure you he is vastly lik'd by the ladies.

CHARLOT.

He is.

JACK.

Yes, indeed. Mrs. Congo, at the Grecian coffee-house, says, he's the soberest youth that comes to the house; and all Mrs. Mittens's 'prentices throw down their work, and run to the window every time he goes by.

CHARLOT.

Upon my word!

JACK.

And moreover, besides that, he has several great estates in the country; but only for the present, he is kept out of 'em all by the owners.

CHARLOT.

Ah, Jack! that's the worst part of the story.

JACK.

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JACK.

Pshaw! that's nothing at all. His guardian, Mr. Fairplay, has been with father to-day, and says, he is certain that he can set all to rights in a trice!

CHARLOT.

Well, Jack, when that point is determin'd, it will be time enough to—

JACK.

Then! Lord of mercy! why, sister Charlot, it is my private opinion that if you don't give him some crumbs of comfort, he won't live till Midsummer term.

CHARLOT.

I warrant you. Either Cupid's darts were always but poetical engines, or they have been lately depriv'd of their points. Love holds no place in the modern bills of mortality. However, Jack, you may tell your friend, that I have observ'd his frequent walks in our street.

JACK.

Walks! Why one should think he was appointed to relieve the old watchman; for no sooner one is *off*, but the other comes *on*.

CHARLOT.

And that from his eyes being constantly fixed on my window (for the information of which, I presume he is indebted to you.)——

JACK.

He! he! he!

CHARLOT.

I had a pretty shrewd guess at his business; but tell him that unless my fa——Hush! our tyrant is return'd. Don't leave the house till I see you.

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Enter Mrs. CIRCUIT and BETTY.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

So, Sir, what makes you loitering from chambers? I thought I told you, you should never be here but at meals? [*Exit Jack.*] One spy is enough in a family.—Miss, you may go to your room; and d'ye hear—I shall have company, so you need not come down. [*Exit Charlot.*]—Betty, no message or letter?

BETTY.

None, Madam.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

That is amazing!—You know I expect Colonel Secret and Mrs. Simper every instant.

BETTY.

Yes, Madam.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

Put the fruit and the wine on the table in the next room.

BETTY.

Very well, Madam.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

And, Betty, order the fellow to let nobody in but Sir Luke.

BETTY.

Madam, I shall take care. [*Exit.*]

Mrs. CIRCUIT *sits down.*

The ballot must be over by this time. Sure there is nothing so dreadful as a state of suspense: but should they black ball me!—No, there's no danger of that; miss Mattadore has insur'd me success.—Well, this is certainly one of the most useful institutions; it positively supplies the only point of time one does not

G

know

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know how to employ. From twelve, the hour of one's rising, to dinner, is a most horrible chasm; for though seizing the mercers and milliners by tumbling their wares, is now and then an entertaining amusement, yet upon repetition it palls.—But every morning to be sure of a party, and then again at night after a rout, to have a place to retire to; to be quite freed from all pain of providing; not to be pester'd at table with the odious company of clients, and country cousins; for I am determin'd to dine, and sup at the club, every day. I can tell 'em, they'll have but very few forfeits from me.

Enter BETTY, in haste, with a Letter.

B E T T Y.

By a chairman, Madam, from the Thatch'd House.

Mrs. C I R C U I T.

Give it me, Betty, this instant;—*ay—this is Mattadore's hand. [opens and reads the letter.]*
“My dear Circuit—it is with the utmost concern, and confusion, I find myself oblig'd to acquaint you, that notwithstanding all the pains I have taken, the club have thought fit to reject.”—Oh! *[she faints.]*

B E T T Y.

Bless my soul! my lady is gone!—John! Will! Kitty! run hither this instant!—

Enter two MAIDS and a Man SERVANT.

A L L.

What, what's the matter?

B E T T Y.

Quick! quick! some Hartshorn and water *[pats her band.]* Madam! madam—

THE LAME LOVER. 48

SERVANT.

Here! here! here! [*bringing water.*]

BETTY.

John, go for the *potter-carrier* this instant—
I believe to my soul she is dead—Kitty, fetch
some feathers to burn under her nose;—there,
stand further off, and give her some air—

Enter Sir Luke.

Sir LUKE.

Hey day! what the deuce is the matter?
what's the meaning of all this, Mrs. Betty?

BETTY.

Oh! Sir, is it you—my poor lady! [*cries*] clap
the bottle hard to her nose.

Sir LUKE.

But how came it about?

BETTY.

Some of the *contents* of that curs'd letter,
she has there in her hand.

Sir LUKE.

Here, here, take some of my *eau de luce*. [*of-
fering a bottle.*]

BETTY.

There! she recovers a little—some water—I
believe it is nothing but a *satirical* fit, I have
had them myself—now she opens her eyes—so,
so—bend her forward a little.

Sir LUKE.

My sweet Mrs. Circuit.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

Who is that?

BETTY.

Nobody at all madam, but only Sir Luke.

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Mrs. CIRCUIT.

Oh! Sir Luke, such a stroke, so fatal, so sudden, it is not in nature I should ever survive it.

Sir LUKE.

Marry heaven forbid! but what cause—what could—

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

Leave the room. [*To the servants, who go out.*] Only, look over that letter.

Sir LUKE.

Hum, hum,—[*reads*] “fit to reject you—this—

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

There! there! there!

Sir LUKE.

I own this is the utmost malice of fortune—but let me finish the letter.—“This calamity, “dear Circuit, is of such a nature as baffles all “advice, or interposition of friends, I shall “therefore leave you to time, and your own “good understanding.” [*pretty and sensible.*]—“yours,” &c.—But let us see, what says the postscript—[*reads.*] “Perhaps it may give you “some comfort to know that you had sixteen “almonds, and but two raisins against you.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

But two!

Sir LUKE.

No more.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

This must be Kitty Cribbage’s doing, she has been tattling about the paltry trifle I owe her.

Sir LUKE.

Not unlikely: but come, bear up, my dear madam, and consider that *two*—

THE LAME LOVER. 45

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

Is as bad as two thousand.

Sir LUKE.

Granted; but perhaps it mayn't be too late to repair.—Gadso! I have thought of a scheme—I'll be elected myself, and then I warrant we manage—

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

You, Sir Luke? that never can be.

Sir LUKE.

No, Madam, and why not?—why you don't suppose that they wou'd venture to—

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

It would not only be against the spirit, but the very letter of their constitution to chuse you a member.

Sir LUKE.

Ay, Madam, how so?

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

Their statutes are selected from all the codes that ever existed from the days of Lycurgus to the present Czarina.

Sir LUKE.

Well.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

The law that relates to your case they have borrow'd from the Roman religion.

Sir LUKE.

As how?

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

As no man can be admitted a monk, who has the least corporal spot, or defect; so, no candidate can be receiv'd as a member who is depriv'd of the use of any one of his limbs.

Sir

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Sir L U K E.

Nay, then indeed I am clearly cut out; that incapacity can never be got over.

Mrs. C I R C U I T.

Indeed, the Serjeant says, if the club could be induc'd to *resolve* in your favour, then the *original law* would signify nothing.

Sir L U K E.

Well, well, we'll see what can be done. [*A loud knocking.*] But hush! the company's come; collect yourself, sweet Mrs. Circuit; don't give your enemies the malicious pleasure of seeing how this disappointment affects you.

Mrs. C I R C U I T.

Never fear; I know a little too much of the world not to turn this defeat to my credit.

Enter Colonel SECRET and Mrs. SIMPER.

Mrs. S I M P E R.

Your servant, Sir Luke; my dear Circuit, I am frighten'd to death—your people tell me, you are but just recover'd from a—

Mrs. C I R C U I T.

Oh! nothing at all! a faintness, a kind of swimming—but those people are ever swelling that mole hills to mountains.

Mrs. S I M P E R.

I protest I was afraid that you had suffer'd your late disappointment to lay hold of your spirits.

Mrs. C I R C U I T.

What disappointment, my dear?

C O L O N E L.

Mrs. Simper hints at the little mistake made this morning at the Thatch'd House.

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Mrs. CIRCUIT.

That! ridiculous! I could have told you that a fortnight ago, child—all my own doing.

Mrs. SIMPER.

How!

Sir LUKE.

Entirely.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

Oh! I always detested the thoughts of the thing;—they would put me up, let me say what I would, so I was reduc'd to the necessity of prevailing upon two of my friends to *black ball* me.

Mrs. SIMPER.

That, indeed, alters the case.

COLONEL.

I am vastly happy to hear it: your old acquaintance were afraid they should lose you.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

It is a sign they know but little of me—but come, my good folks, I have prepared a small collation in the next room, will you— [*Exeunt.*]

Enter JACK and WOODFORD.

JACK.

I'll watch sister, to see that nobody comes; now Woodford make good use of your time. [*Exit Woodford.*] There, I have left 'em together; if I had staid, I don't believe they would have open'd their mouths for a month: I never saw such an alteration in a lad since the day I was born.—Why, if I had not known him before, I should not have thought he had a word to throw to a dog; but I remember the old proverb:

True

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True lovers are shy,
When people are by.

I'll take a peep to see how they go on:—there they are, just in the same posture I left them; she folding her fingers, and he twirling his hat; why they don't even look at each other: was there ever such a couple of—stay, stay, now he opens his mouth—pshaw!—lord! there he shuts it again—hush! I hear somebody coming—no—nothing at all:—mother is safe I am sure,—there is no danger from her—now let us take t'other—*[peeps at the door.]* hum!—gadso, matters are mightily mended—there! there! very well—there he lays down the law—now he claps his hand on his heart—vastly pretty, I vow—there he swops with both his knees on the ground—charming!—and squeezes his hat with both hands, like one of the actors—delightful! she wants him to rise, and he won't—prodigious moving indeed!

Enter BETTY.

B E T T Y.

So Sir, what are you doing there?

J A C K.

There! where?

B E T T Y.

With your eyes glew'd close to the keyhole.

J A C K.

I wanted to speak a word to my sister.

B E T T Y.

Then why don't you open her door?

J A C K.

I did not know but she might be saying her prayers.

B E T T Y.

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BETTY.

Prayers! a likely story! Who says their prayers at this time of the day?—No, no, that won't pass upon me.—Let me look—very pretty! So, so, I see there's somebody else at his prayers too—fine doings!—As soon as the company goes, I shall take care to inform Madam your mother.

JACK.

Nay, but Mrs. Betty you won't be so—

BETTY.

Indeed, Mr. John, but I shall—I'll swallow none of your secrets, believe me.

JACK.

What, perhaps your stomach is overloaded already.

BETTY.

No matter for that, I shall be even with Miss for telling Master about and concerning my drums.

JACK.

Why, Mrs. Betty, surely sister could not—

BETTY.

When she very well knows that I have not sent cards but twice the whole season.

JACK.

Lord! what signi—

BETTY.

What would she say, if she visited the great families I do? For tho' I am as I may say but a commoner, no private gentlewoman's gentlewoman, has a more prettier set of acquaintance.

JACK.

Well but—

H

BET

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B E T T Y.

My routs indeed!—There is Mrs. Allspice, who lives with lady Cicily Sequence, has fix tables every Sunday, besides looers, and braggers; and moreover proposes giving a masquerade, the beginning of June, and I intends being there.

J A C K.

Well, but to talk calmly.

B E T T Y.

And as Miss is so fond of fetching and carrying, you may tell her we are to have a private play among ourselves, as the quality have: the *Distrustful Mother*, 'tis call'd—*Pylades*, by Mr. Thomas, Lord Catastrophe's butler—*Hermione*, Mrs. Allspice; and I shall do *Andromache* myself.

J A C K.

A play! lord, Mrs. Betty, will you give me a ticket?

B E T T Y.

All's one for that—and so you may tell Miss that—[*bell rings*] coming, Madam, this minute—and that, Mr. John, is the long and the short on't. [*Bell rings again.*] Lord, I am coming—[*Exit.*]

Enter WOODFORD to JACK.

W O O D F O R D.

What's the matter?

J A C K.

Here, Betty, my mother's *fac totum*, has just discover'd your haunts; and is gone to lay an information against you—so depend upon it, a search warrant will issue directly.

W O O D F O R D.

Stay but a moment, till I take leave of your sister.

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JACK.

Zooks! I tell you the constables will be here in a trice, so you have not a moment to lose.

WOODFORD.

How unlucky this is!

JACK.

But I hope you have obtain'd a verdict however.

WOODFORD.

No.

JACK.

No!

WOODFORD.

It would not have been decent, to have press'd the judge too soon for a sentence.

JACK.

Soon!—You are a ninny, I tell you so:—here you will suffer judgment to go by default.—You are a pretty practitioner indeed!

WOODFORD.

This, you may know, my dear Jack, is an equity case; I have but just fil'd my bill; one must give the parties time to put in an answer.

JACK.

Time!—How you may come off in court I can't tell, but you will turn out but a poor chamber counsel I fear.—Well, come along, perhaps I may be able to procure another hearing before it is—but lord o'mercy! there is father crossing the hall—should he see us all's over—we have nothing for't but taking shelter with sister.

[*Exeunt.*]

H 2

ACT

A C T III.

Sir LUKE LIMP, Mrs. CIRCUIT, Colonel SECRET, and Mrs. SIMPER, discover'd at a table, with a collation before them.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.
OH! by the bye, Sir Luke—take some of these sweetmeats, my dear [*to Mrs. Simper*]—did not you promise to introduce to me that little agreeable piece of imperfection that belongs to the opera?—Colonel, won't you taste the champaign?

Sir LUKE.
 Who, Signior *Piano*?—Let me assist Mrs. Simper.—Why, Madam, I made an attempt; but at present—shan't I send you a biscuit?—he is in the possession of a certain lady, who never suffers him out of her sight for a moment.

Mrs. SIMPER.
 Oh! the curmudgeon!—I am vastly fond of these custards.

Sir LUKE.
 Yes, they have a delicate flavour—but he promis'd, if possible, to escape for an hour—won't you? [*to Mrs. Circuit,*]

Mrs. CIRCUIT.
 No, it gives me the heart-burn.—Then let us leave him a cover.

COLONEL.
 By all means in the world.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.
 But there is, likewise, another party, for whom a place ought to be kept.

Mrs. SIMPER.
 Another! Who can that be I wonder?

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Mrs. CIRCUIT.

A small appendix of mine.

Sir LUKE.

How, Madam!

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

You need not be jealous, Sir Luke—taste that tart Mrs. Simper—it is only my husband the Serjeant.—Ha! ha! ha!—Betty makes them herself.

Mrs. SIMPER.

Oh! you abominable creature! How could such a thought come into your head?

Sir LUKE.

Ma'am—*[Offering sweetmeats to Mrs. Simper.]*

Mrs. SIMPER.

Not a bit more, I thank you.—I swear and vow I should swoon at the sight.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

And I should receive him with the polite indifference of an absolute stranger.

Sir LUKE.

Well said, my good Lady Intrepid! But, notwithstanding, I would venture a trifle that his appearance would give you such an electrical shock——

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

You are vastly deceiv'd.

Sir LUKE.

Dare you come to the proof? Will you give me leave to introduce Mr. Serjeant? He is not far off.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

What, my husband?

Sir LUKE.

Even he! I saw him as I enter'd the hall.

Mrs.

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Mrs. CIRCUIT.

Impossible!

Sir LUKE.

Nay, then I must fetch him. [*Exit Sir Luke.*]

COLONEL.

I can't conceive what the knight wou'd be at.

Mrs. SIMPER.

Why he is mad.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

Or turn'd fool.

*Enter Sir LUKE, with the SERJEANT'S peruke
on a block.*

Sir LUKE.

Now, Madam, have I reason? Is this your husband or not?

Mrs. SIMPER.

It is he; not the least doubt can be made.

COLONEL.

Yes, yes, it is the Serjeant himself.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

I own it; I acknowledge the lord of my wishes. [*Kisses the block.*]

Mrs. SIMPER.

All his features are there!

COLONEL.

The grave cast of his countenance!

Sir LUKE.

The vacant stare of his eye!

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

The livid hue of his lips!

Mrs. SIMPER.

The rubies with which his cheeks are enrich'd!

COLONEL.

The silent solemnity when he sits on the bench!

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Mrs. CIRCUIT.

We must have him at table; but pray good folks let my husband appear like himself.—I'll run for the gown. *Exit.*

Mrs. SIMPER.

By all means in the world.

Sir LUKE.

Dispatch, I beseech you.

Mrs. CIRCUIT returns with a gown and band.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

Sir Luke, lend your assistance.

COLONEL.

There, place him at the head of the table.

[They fix the head at the back of a chair, and place it at table; then all sit.]

Mrs. SIMPER.

Madam, you'll take care of your husband.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

I don't want to be put in mind of my duty.

Mrs. SIMPER.

Oh, Madam! I know that very well.

Sir LUKE.

Come, Hob or Nob, Master Circuit—let us try if we can't fuddle the Serjeant.

COLONEL.

O! fye! have a proper respect for the coif.

Mrs. SIMPER.

Don't be too facetious, Sir Luke: it is not quite so safe to sport with the heads of the law; you don't know how soon you may have a little business together.

Sir LUKE.

But come, the Serjeant is sulky.—I have thought of a way to divert him:—You know
6 he

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he is never so happy as when he is hearing a cause; suppose we were to plead one before him; Mrs. Circuit and I to be counsel, the colonel the clerk, and Mrs. Simper the cryer.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

The finest thought in the world! And stay, to conduct the trial with proper solemnity, let's rummage his wardrobe; we shall there be able to equip ourselves with suitable dresses.

Sir LUKE.

Alons, alons!

Mrs. SIMPER.

There is no time to be lost. *[All rise.]*

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

[Stopping short as they are going out.] But won't my husband be angry, if we leave him alone? Bye, dearee—we shall soon return to thee again. *[Exeunt.]*

Enter Serj. CIRCUIT, not perceiving the collation.

SERJEANT.

So, my lord not being able to sit, there was no occasion for me.—I can't put that girl's nonsense out of my head—My wife is young to be sure, and loves pleasure I own; but as to the *main* article, I have not the least ground to suspect her in that—No, no!—And then Sir Luke! my *profiën ami*, the dearest friend I have in the—Heyday! *[seeing the collation]* What the deuce have we here?—A collation!—So, so—I see madam knows how to divert herself during my absence.—What's this? *[seeing the block]* Oh, ho! ha! ha! ha!—Well, that's pretty enough I protest.—Poor girl, I see she could not be happy without having something at table that resembled me.—How pleas'd she will

THE LAME LOVER. 57

will be to find me here in propria personâ.—By your leave, Mrs. Circuit—*[sits down and eats]* Delicate eating, in troth—and the wine *[drinks]*—Champaign as I live—must have t'other glass—They little think how that gentleman there regales himself in their absence—Ha! ha! ha!—quite convenient, I vow—the heat of the weather has made me—Come, brother Coif, here's your health—*[drinks]*—I must pledge myself I believe—*[drinks again]*—devilish strong—psht!—Somebody's coming—*[gets up and goes towards the wings]*—What do I see? Four lawyers! What the devil can be the meaning of this? I should be glad to get at the bottom of—Hey! By your leave, brother Serjeant—I must crave the use of your robe—*[sits down, and gets under the gown]*—Between ourselves, this is not the first time this gown has cover'd a fraud.

Enter Sir LUKE, Colonel, Mrs. CIRCUIT, and Mrs. SIMPER, dressed as counsellors.

Sir L U K E.

Come, come, gentlemen, dispatch, the court has been waiting some time. Brother Circuit, you have look'd over your brief?

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

What, do you suppose, Sir, that like some of our brethren I defer that till I come into court? No, no.

Sir L U K E.

This cause contains the whole marrow and pith of all modern practice.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

One should think, Sir Luke, you had been bred to the bar.

Sir L U K E.

Child, I was some years in the Temple; but
I the

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the death of my brother robb'd the robe of my labours.

Mrs. SIMPER.

What a loss to the public!

Sir LUKE.

You are smart, Mrs. Simper. I can tell you, Serjeant Snuffle, whose manner I study'd, pronounc'd me a promising youth.

Mrs. SIMPER.

I don't doubt it.

Sir LUKE.

But let us to business. And first, for the state of the case: The parties you know are Hobson and Nobson; the object of litigation is a small parcel of land, which is to decide the fate of a borough.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

True; call'd Turnbury Mead.

Sir LUKE.

Very well. Then to bring matters to a short issue, it was agreed, that Nobson should on the premises cut down a tree, and Hobson bring his action of damage.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

True, true.

Sir LUKE.

The jury being sworn, and the counsellors feed, the court may proceed.—Take your seats—But hold—I hope no gentleman has been touch'd on both sides.

A L L.

Oh! fye!

Sir LUKE.

Let silence be call'd.

Mrs. SIMPER.

Silence in the court!

Sir

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Sir L U K E.

But stop. To be regular, and provide for fresh causes, we must take no notice of the borough and lands, the real objects in view, but stick fast to the tree, which is of no importance at all.

A L L.

True, true.

Sir L U K E.

Brother Circuit, you may proceed.

Mrs. C I R C U I T.

Gentlemen of the Jury.—I am in this cause counsel for Hobson, the plaintiff.—The action is brought against Nebuchadnezer Nobson, That he the said Nobson did cut down a tree, value two-pence, and to his own use said tree did convert.—Nobson justifies, and claims tree as his tree. We will, gentlemen, first state the probable evidence, and then come to the positive: and first as to the probable.—When was this tree here belonging to Hobson, and claim'd by Nobson, cut down? Was it cut down publicly in the day, in the face of the sun, men, women, and children, all the world looking on?—No; it was cut down privately, in the night, in a dark night, nobody *did* see, nobody *could* see:—Hum—And then with respect and regard to this tree, I am instructed to say, gentlemen, it was a beautiful, an ornamental tree to the spot where it grew. Now can it be thought that any man would come for to go in the middle of the night, nobody seeing, nobody *did* see, nobody *could* see, and cut down a tree, which tree was an ornamental tree, if tree had been his tree?—Certainly no.—And again, gentlemen, we moreover insist, that this

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tree was not only ornamental to the spot where it grew, but it was a useful tree to the owner : it was a plumb-tree, and not only a plum-tree, but I am authoriz'd to say the best of plum-trees, it was a damfin plum.—Now can it be thought, that any man wou'd come for to go, in the middle of the night, nobody seeing, nobody *did* see, nobody *could* see, and cut down a tree ; which tree was not only an ornamental tree, but a useful tree ; and not only a useful tree, but a plum-tree ; and not only a plum-tree, but the best of plum-trees, a damfin plum ? Most assuredly no.—If so be then, that this be so, and so it most certainly is, I apprehend no doubt will remain with the court, but my client a verdict will have, with full costs of suits, in such a manner and so forth, as may nevertheless appear notwithstanding.

Sir L U K E.

Have you done, Mr. Serjeant ?

Mrs. C I R C U I T.

You may proceed.

Sir L U K E.

Gentlemen of the jury—I am in this cause counsel for Hob—Zouns ! I think the head moves.

A L L.

Hey !

C O L O N E L.

No, no, Mrs. Simper jogg'd the chair with her foot, that was all.

Sir L U K E.

For Hercules Hobson—(I cou'd have sworn it had stir'd)—I sha'nt gentlemen upon this occasion, attempt to move your passions, by flowing periods, and rhetorical flowers, as Mr. Serjeant

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jeant has done; no, gentlemen, if I get at your hearts, I will make my way thro' your heads, however thick they may be—in order to which, I will pursue the learned gentleman, thro' what he calls his probable proofs: and first, as to this tree's being cut down in the night; in part we will grant him that point, but, under favour, not a dark night, Mr. Serjeant; no, quite the reverse, we can prove that the moon shone bright, with uncommon lustre that night—So that if so be as how people did not see that was none—[Serjeant *sneezes.*] nay, Mrs. Circuit, if you break the thread of my—

Mrs. C I R C U I T.

Me break!—I said nothing I'm sure.

Sir L U K E.

That's true, but you sneez'd.

Mrs. C I R C U I T.

Not I.

Sir L U K E.

I am sure somebody did; it could not be the head—consider the least interruption puts one out of one's—None of our faults, they might have look'd on and seen if they would. And then as to this beautiful tree, with which Mr. Serjeant has ornamented his spot—No, gentlemen, no such matter at all; I am instructed to say quite the reverse; a stunted tree, a blighted, blasted tree; a tree not only limbless, and leafless, but very near lifeless; that was the true state of the tree: and then as to its use, we own it was a plum-tree indeed, but not of the kind Mr. Serjeant sets forth, a damsin plum; our proofs say loudly a bull plum; but if so be and it had been a damsin plum, will any man go for to say, that a damsin plum is the
2
best

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best kind of plum ; not a whit, I take upon me to say it is not a noun substantive plum—with plenty of sugar it does pretty well indeed in a tart, but to eat it by itself, will Mr. Serjeant go to compare it with the queen mother, the padrigons—

SERJEANT.

[*Appearing suddenly from under the gown.*]
The green gages, or the orlines.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

As I live 'tis my husband !

SERJEANT.

Nay, Sir Luke don't you run away too—give me a buis—since I was born, I never heard a finer reply ; I am sorry I did not hear your argument out—but I cou'd not resist.

Sir LUKE.

This I own was a little surprize—had you been long here Mr. Serjeant ?

SERJEANT.

But the instant you enter'd.

Sir LUKE.

So, then all is safe.

[*Aside.*]

SERJEANT.

But come, won't you refresh you, Sir Luke—you have had hard duty to day.

Sir LUKE.

I drank very freely at table.

SERJEANT.

Nay, for the matter of that, I ha'n't been idle ; [*both drink.*] But come, throw off your gown, and let us finish the bottle : I ha'n't had such a mind to be merry I can't tell the day when.

Sir LUKE.

Nay then, Mr. Serjeant, have at you—come, here's long life and health to the law. [*Drinks.*]

SER-

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SERJEANT.

I'll pledge that toast in a bumper.—[*Drinks.*]
—I'll take Charlot's hint, and see if I can't draw
the truth out of the Knight by a bottle. [*Aside.*]

Sir L U K E.

I'll try if I can't fuddle the fool, and get rid of
him that way. [*Aside.*]

SERJEANT.

I could not have thought it: why where the
deuce did you pick up all this? But by the bye,
pray who was the cryer?

Sir L U K E.

Did not you know her? Mrs. Simper, your
neighbour.

SERJEANT.

A pestilent jade! she's a good one I warrant.

Sir L U K E.

She is thought very pretty; what say you to
a glass in her favor?

SERJEANT.

By all means in the world! [*they drink*] and
that spark the clerk?

Sir L U K E.

Colonel Secret, a friend to the lady you
toasted.

SERJEANT.

A friend! oh, ay—I understand you—come,
let us join 'em together.

Sir L U K E.

Alons. [*drink.*] Egad, I shall be caught in
my own trap, I begin to feel myself fluster'd
already. [*Aside.*]

SERJEANT.

Delicate white wine, indeed! I like it better
every glass. [*Sings.*]

Drink and drive care away,
Drink and be merry.

Sir

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Sir L U K E.

True, my dear Serjeant—this is the searcher of secrets—the only key to the heart.

S E R J E A N T.

Right boy, in veritas vino.

Sir L U K E.

No deceit in a bumper. [*Sings.*] Drink and be merry.

S E R J E A N T.

Merry! dammee, what a sweet fellow you are; what would I give, to be half so jolly and [gay.

Sir L U K E.

[*Appearing very drunk.*] Would you? and yet do you know, Serjeant, that at this very juncture of time, there is a thing has popp'd into my head, that distresses me very much.

S E R J E A N T.

Then drive it out with a bumper [*Drink.*] Well, how is it now.

Sir L U K E.

Now!—the matter is not mended at all.

S E R J E A N T.

What the deuce is the business that so sticks in your stomach.

Sir L U K E.

You know, my dear Serjeant, I am your friend, your real, your affectionate friend.

S E R J E A N T.

I believe, it Sir Luke.

Sir L U K E.

And yet, for these six months, I have conceal'd a secret, that touches you near, very near—

S E R J E A N T.

Me near! That was wrong, very wrong; friends should have all things in common.

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Sir LUKE.

That's what I said to myself; Sir Luke, says I, open your heart to your friend; but to tell you the truth, what sealed up my lips, was the fear that this secret should make you sulky and sad.

SERGEANT.

Me sulky and sad! ha! ha! how little you know of me.

Sir LUKE.

Swear then that you won't be uneasy.

SERGEANT.

Well, I do.

Sir LUKE.

[Rising.] Soft! let us see that all's safe;—well, Mr. Serjeant, do you know that you are—a fine, honest fellow?

SERGEANT.

Is that such a secret?

Sir LUKE.

Be quiet; a damn'd honest fellow—but as to your wife—

SERGEANT.

Well?

Sir LUKE.

She is an infamous strum—

SERGEANT.

How! it is a falsehood Sir Luke, my wife is as virtuous a woman—

Sir LUKE.

Oh! if you are angry, your servant—I thought that the news would have pleas'd you—for after all, what is the business to me? What do I get by the bargain?

SERGEANT.

That's true; but then would it not vex any man to hear his wife abus'd in such a—

Sir LUKE.

Not if it's true, you old fool.

K

SER.

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SERJEANT.

I say it is false: prove it; give me that satisfaction Sir Luke.

Sir LUKE.

Oh! you shall have that pleasure directly; and to come at once to the point—you remember last New-year's day how severely it froze.

SERJEANT.

I do recollect.

Sir LUKE.

Very well; we are all invited to dine at Alderman Inkle's.

SERJEANT.

Very right.

Sir LUKE.

Well, and I did not go: Mrs. Circuit made me dine here, in this house—was it my fault?

SERJEANT.

No, no, Sir Luke, no.

Sir LUKE.

At table says she—she said, I was the picture of you—was it my fault?

SERJEANT.

Well, and suppose you are; where's the mischief in that?

Sir LUKE.

Be quiet, I tell you;—then throwing her arms round my neck,—it is my husband himself I embrace, it is my little old man that I kiss!—for she has a prodigious affection for you at bottom—was it my fault?

SERJEANT.

But what is there serious in this, dost think I mind such trifles?

Sir LUKE.

Hold your tongue, you fool, for a moment—then throwing her Teresa aside—upon my soul she is prodigious fine every where here—was it my fault?

SER-

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SERJEANT.

My fault! my fault! I see no fault in all this.

Sir LUKE.

[*Hatching a cry.*] No! why then my dear friend, do you know that I was so unworthy, so profligate, so abandon'd—as to—[*rises*] say no more, the business is done.

SERJEANT.

Ay, indeed!

Sir LUKE.

Oh! fact! there is not the least doubt of the matter; this is no *bear say*, dy'e see, I was by all the while.

SERJEANT.

Very pretty! very fine upon my word.

Sir LUKE.

Was it my fault? what could I do? put yourself in my place; I must have been more, or less, than man to resist.

SERJEANT.

Your fault, Sir Luke, no, no—you did but your duty—but as to my wife—

Sir LUKE.

She's a diabolical fiend, I shall hate her as long as I live.

SERJEANT.

And I too.

Sir LUKE.

Only think of her forcing me, as it were with a sword at my breast, to play such a trick; you, my dear Serjeant, the best, truest friend I have in the world.

[*Weeps.*]

SERJEANT.

[*Weeping.*] Dry your tears, dear Sir Luke; I shall ever gratefully acknowledge your confidence in trusting *me* with the secret—[*taking him forward.*] But I think it might be as well kept from the rest of the world.

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Sir L U K E.

My dear soul, do you think I would tell it to any mortal but *you*? No, no, not to my brother himself—You are the only man upon earth I wou'd trust.

S E R J E A N T.

Ten thousand thanks, my dear friend! sure there is no comfort, no balsam in life like a friend—but I shall make Madam Circuit remember—

Sir L U K E.

We neither of us ought to forgive her—were I you, I'd get a divorce.

S E R J E A N T.

So I will—provided you will promise not to marry her after.

Sir L U K E.

Me! I'll sooner be torn to pieces by wild horses—no, my dear friend, we will retire to my house in the country together, and there, in innocence and simplicity, feeding our pigs and pigeons, like Pyramus and Thisbe, we will live the paragons of the age.

S E R J E A N T.

Agreed; we will be the whole earth to each other; for, as Mr. *Shakespear* says,

“The friend thou hast and his adoption try'd
“Clasp to thy soul, and quit the world beside.”—

Sir L U K E.

Zouns, here comes Madam Serjeant herself.

Enter Mrs. CIRCUIT.

Mrs CIRCUIT.

So, Gentlemen! a sweet tête à tête you have been holding—but I know it all, not a syllable you have said has been lost.

Sir L U K E.

Then, I hope you have been well entertained Mrs. Circuit?

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Mrs. CIRCUIT.

And you, you mean spirited, dastardly wretch, to lend a patient ear to his infamous, improbable tales, equally shameful both to you and me.

SERGEANT.

How Madam! have you the assurance—

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

Yes, Sir, the assurance that innocence gives; there is not a soul, I thank heaven, that can lay the least soil, the least spot, on my virtue; nor is there a man on earth but yourself would have sat and silently listen'd to the fictions and fables of this intemperate sot.

SERGEANT.

Why to be sure the knight is overtaken a little; very near drunk.

Sir LUKE.

I hope he believes it is a lie.

[*Aside.*]

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

Do me instant justice on this defamer, this liar, or never more expect to see me in your house.

SERGEANT.

I begin to find out the fraud, this is all a sham of the knight's.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

I'll drive this instant to a friend of mine in the Commons, and see if no satisfaction can be had, for blasting the reputation of a woman like me—and hark you Sir, what inducement, what devil could prompt?—

SERGEANT.

Ay; what devil could prompt—

Sir LUKE.

Heyday!

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

But I guess at your motive; you flatter'd yourself

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yourself, that by marrying Charlot, and discarding of me you should engross all his affections and—

SERJEANT.

True, true—stop, my life, let me come at him, a little : hark you, Mr. Knight, I begin to discover that you are a very sad dog.

Sir LUKE.

Et tu Brute!

SERJEANT.

Brute!—you'll find I am not the brute you would have made me believe—I have consider'd both sides of the question.

Sir LUKE.

Both sides of the question?

SERJEANT.

Both: if your story is true, you are a scoundrel to debauch the wife of your friend; and if it is false, you are an infamous liar.

Sir LUKE.

Well argued.

SERJEANT.

So in both cases, get out of my house.

Sir LUKE.

Nay, but Serjeant—

SERJEANT.

Troop I tell you, and never again enter these walls—you have libelled my wife, and I will see you no more.

Sir LUKE.

Was there ever such a—

SERJEANT.

March! and as to my daughter, I would as soon marry her to a forma pauperis client.

[Exit Sir Luke.]

Mrs CIRCUIT.

Do you consider, Mr. Circuit, where you are pushing the fellow?—That chamber is Charlot's.

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Enter Sir LUKE, WOODFORD, CHARLOT, and JACK.

Sir L U K E.

Heyday! who the deuce have we here?—Pray walk in, my good folks—your servant Miss Charlot; your servant Mr. What-d'ye-call-um.—Mr. Serjeant, you need not trouble yourself to cater for Miss; your family you see can provide for themselves.

S E R J E A N T.

Heyday! What the deuce is all this! Who are you Sir, and how came you here? [To Woodford.]

J A C K.

It was I, father, that brought him.

S E R J E A N T.

How, sirrah!

Sir L U K E.

Well said my young limb of the law.

J A C K.

Come, let us have none o'your—tho' I brought Mr. Woodford, you could not persuade me to do the same office for you—father, never stir if he did not make me the proffer, if I would let him into the house the night you was at Kingston, of a new pair of silk stockings, and to learn me a minuet.

Sir L U K E.

Me! I should never have got you to turn out your toes.

J A C K.

Ay, and moreover you made me push out my chest, and do so with my fingers, as if I was taking two pinches of snuff.

Sir L U K E.

You see, Mr. Serjeant, what a fondness, I have for every twig of your family.

S E R.

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SERGEANT.

I shall thank you hereafter—but from you, Charlot, I expected other guests—

CHARLOT.

When, Sir, you hear this whole matter explain'd, you will acquit I am sure.

WOODFORD.

Indeed, Sir, I am wholly to blame; my being here was as much a surprize upon Miss Charlot as—

SERGEANT.

But now you are here, pray what's your business?

JACK.

O! father, I can acquaint you with that—he wanted me to bring a love letter to Charlot, so I told him he might bring it himself, for that I would not do any such thing for never so much, for fear of offending of you.

SERGEANT.

You mended the matter indeed—but after all, who, and what are you?

JACK.

It's the young gentleman that lives over our heads, to whom Mr. Fairplay is guardian.

SERGEANT.

Who, Woodford?

JACK.

The same.

SERGEANT.

And are you, young man in a situation to think of a wife?

WOODFORD.

I am flattered, Sir, that as justice is with me, I shall one day have no contemptible fortune to throw at her feet.

SERGEANT.

Justice is! What signifies justice?—Is the law with you, you fool?

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WOODFORD.

With your help, Sir, I should hope for their union, upon this occasion at least.

SERJEANT.

Well, Sir, I shall re-consider your papers, and, if there are probable grounds, I may be induc'd to hear your proposals.

WOODFORD.

Nay then, Sir, the recovering my paternal possessions makes me anxious indeed.—Could I hope that the young lady's good wish would attend me?

CHARLOT.

I have a father, and can have no will of my own.

Sir LUKE.

So then it seems poor Pil Garlick here is discarded at once.

SERJEANT.

Why, could you have the impudence, after what has happen'd, to hope that——

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

He has given wonderful proofs of his modesty.

Sir LUKE.

Be quiet, Mrs. Circuit.—Come, good folks, I will set all matters to rights in a minute; and first, Mr. Serjeant, it becomes me to tell you, that I never intended to marry your daughter.

SERJEANT.

How! never!

Sir LUKE.

Never. She is a fine girl I allow; but would it now, Mr. Serjeant, have been honest in me, to have robb'd the whole sex of my person, and confin'd my favors to her?

L

SER-

74 THE LAME LOVER.

SERJEANT.

How!

Sir LUKE.

No! I was struck with the immorality of the thing; and therefore to make it impossible that you should ever give me your daughter, I invented the story I told you concerning Mrs. Circuit and me.

SERJEANT.

How!

Sir LUKE.

Truth, upon my honour.—Your wife there will tell you the whole was a lye.

SERJEANT.

Nay, then indeed.—But with what face can I look up to my dear? I have injur'd her beyond the hopes of forgiveness.—Wou'd you, lovee, but pass an act of oblivion—

Sir LUKE.

See me here prostrate to implore your clemency in behalf of my friend.

Mrs. CIRCUIT.

Of that I can't determine directly.—But as you seem to have some sense of your guilt, I shall grant you a reprieve for the present; which contrition and amendment may, perhaps, in time swell into a pardon.

But if again offending you are caught,

SERJEANT.

Then let me suffer, dearee, as I ought,



F I N I S.

4.

DOCTOR LAST

IN

HIS CHARIOT:

A

COMEDY:

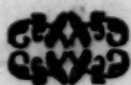
As it is performed at the

THEATRE ROYAL

IN THE

HAY-MARKET.

THE THIRD EDITION.



L O N D O N:

Printed for W. GRIFFIN, at GARRICK'S HEAD,
in CATHARINE-STREET, STRAND.

MDCCLXXIII.

[Price 1s. 6d.]

DOCTOR LAST

HIS CHARACTER

COMEDY

THEATRE ROYAL



HAY-MARKET

THE THIRD EDITION



LONDON

Printed by W. Gifford, at the Theatre Royal, Hay-Market.

1800

T O

SAMUEL FOOTE, Esq;

S I R,

TH^{O'}, had this comedy failed, which, from it's first night's reception, was somewhat more than probable, I should certainly have suffered the whole disgrace, it is not with less readiness, that I seize this opportunity, on its better success, to acknowledge the obligations which the editor of DOCTOR LAST IN HIS CHARIOT has to Mr. FOOTE.

I am indebted to you for undertaking a very long part; which, in your circumstances, I consider as a particular favour: I am indebted to you, for exerting unusual spirit in the performance, when there was little hopes of putting the audience in a good humour; and more, (don't be ashamed when I boast of it) I am indebted to you, not only for a whole scene, the consultation of physicians in the first act, but for several hints throughout the piece, which had the happiest effect, tho' some of them may, perhaps, have suffered by being cloathed in my language.

I am more particularly acknowledging upon this occasion, because, in the repeated remarks which the news-papers have

thought proper to make on your address to the public, the first night this thing was acted, they would insinuate, that you used the advantage your situation gave you, of a personal application to the audience, in order to throw contempt upon the piece while that and it's author were immediately under your protection.

However, Sir, while I return you those thanks which justice and gratitude oblige me to; I am extremely doubtful whether the public will consider the favours I confess, as any capital exertion of benevolence on your part; for they will naturally say, that, as to your acting, the play could not possibly have done without it, which, after you had received it, must have been to your loss; and, for giving me your wit and humour, all the world is sensible, that there is scarcely a man living who has so much to spare. I am,

S I R,

Your most obliged

Humble servant,

THE EDITOR.

P R E F A C E.

THE following piece is a translation of *Le MALADE IMAGINAIRE*, one of *MOLIERE*'s most celebrated productions in the farcical kind. Some scenes which could not possibly succeed upon the English stage, have been removed, and those substituted, in which the character of *DOCTOR LAST* is introduced; and, for that character only, the editor has to answer; nothing else in the subsequent scenes, being intirely his.

How it has hitherto appeared upon the stage, or how it may appear hereafter, is at present of little consequence. It is submitted to the candour of intelligent readers, who will consider a farce as such, and decide upon its merit accordingly. To add more is needless, except thanks to the performers, particularly to *Mr. Sowdon*, for his kindness to the editor, when he stood in great need of assistance; and to that admirable comedian, *Mr. Weston*, by whose excellent performance, *Doctor Last* is still render'd a laughable object.

P R O.

P R O L O G U E,

Written by D. GARRICK, Esq. and spoken by
Mr. FOOTE.

YOUR servants, kind masters, from bottom to top.
Be assur'd, while I breathe, or can walk—I mean
hop.

Be you pleas'd to smile, or be pleas'd to grumble,
Be whatever you please, I am still your most humble.
As to laugh is a right only given to man,
To keep up that right is my pride and my plan—
Fair ladies, don't frown, I meant woman too—
What's common to man, must be common to you.—
You all have a right your sweet muscles to curl,
From the old smirking prude, to the titt'ring young girl;
And ever with pleasure my brains I cou'd spin,
To make you all giggle, and you, ye gods, grin.
In this present summer, as well as the past,
To your favour again we present Doctor Last,
Who, by wonderful feats, in the papers recounted,
From trudging on foot, to his chariot has mounted:
Amongst the old Britons, when war was begun,
Charioteers would slay ten, while the foot could slay one:
So, when doctors on wheels with dispatches are sent,
Mortality bills rise a thousand per cent.
But think not to physic that quack'ry's confin'd,
All the world is a stage, and the quacks are mankind—
There's trade, law, and state-quacks; nay, wou'd we
but search,
We should find—Heaven bless us!—some quacks in
the church!

The stiff band, and stiff bob of the methodist race,
Give the balsam of life and the tincture of grace,
And the poor wretched patients think much good is
done 'em,

Tho' blisters and causticks are ever upon them.
As for law and the state, if quack'ry's a curse,
Which will make the good bad, and the bad will make
worse;

We

P R O L O G U E.

We should point out the quack, from the regular
brother,

They are wiser than I who can tell one from t'other!
Can the stage with its bills, puffs, and patents, stand
trial,

Shall we find out no quacks in the Theatres Royal?
Some dramatical drugs that are puff'd on the town,
Cause many wry faces, and scarce will *go down*.
Nay an audience sometimes will in quack'ry delight,
And sweat down an author some pounds in one night.
To return to our quack—should he, help'd by the
weather,

Raise laughter and kind perspiration together,
Should his nostrums of hips and of vapours but cure ye,
His chariot he well will deserve, I assure ye.

'Tis easy to set up a chariot in town,
And easier still is that chariot laid down.

He petitions by me, both as doctor and lover,
That you'll not stop his wheels, or his chariot tip over:
Fix him well, I beseech you, the worst on't would be,
Should you overturn *him*, you may *over set me*.



Dramatis

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

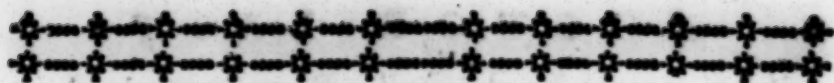
Ailwou'd,	- - -	Mr. Foote.
Dr. Laft,	- - -	Mr. Welton,
Friendly,	- - -	Mr. Sowdon.
Hargrave,	- - -	Mr. Davis.
Wag,	- - -	Mr. Bannifter.

W O M E N,

Mrs. Ailwou'd,	- - -	Mrs. Jefferies,
Nancy,	- - -	Miss Ogilvie,
Polly,	- - -	Miss Rose.
Prudence,	- - -	Mrs. Gardiner.

Physicians, &c.

SCENE, AILWOU'D'S *House*, in LONDON.



DOCTOR LAST

I N

HIS CHARIOT.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A Parlour in AILWOU'D's House, with a Table and Chairs. PRUDENCE enters followed by WAG.

Wag. **W**ELL, but, Mrs. Prudence, don't be in a passion.

Pru. Mr. Wag, I will be in a passion; and it's enough to put any one in a passion to have to do with such indiscreet people as your master. I believe he's out of his senses for my part.

Wag. He's in love, Mrs. Prudence, and that's half way.

Pru. So often as he has been forbid either to come or send after my mistress, to persist, in spite of all our cautions and interdictions——

Wag. He does not come or send, child.

Pru. No—what do you do here then, and be hang'd to you?

Wag. I only bring a letter.

Pru. Very pretty jesting, truly. I was afraid that some of the family wou'd take notice of my
B talking

talking to you in the hall—But, in truth, here is no place of safety in the house; for now I've brought you up here, I'm afraid every moment of my master's surprizing us.

Wag. Does the old gentleman always keep the house then?

Pru. Keep the house!—he generally keeps his chamber, and very often his bed. You must know he's one of those folks that are always sick, continually complaining, ever taking physic, and, in reality, never ailing any thing. I'm his nurse, with a plague to him, and he worries me out of my life.

Wag. Wou'd I were sick upon the same conditions.

Pru. Come, come, no fooling.—You said you had a letter from your master to my young lady: give it me, and I'll deliver it to her.

Wag. There it is, my dear.

Pru. But am I not a very naughty wench to be accessary, in this manner, to a clandestine correspondence?

Wag. The billet is perfectly innocent, I can assure you; and such as your lady will read with pleasure.

Pru. Well, now go away.

Wag. I won't, without you give me a kiss.

Pru. Poh, you're a fool.

Wag. I won't, poz——

Pru. Then you may stay there all night.

Wag. Mrs. Prue—come.

Pru. Nay, if it's worth having, it's worth fetching.

Wag. Say you so, my girl—Thus, then, I approach those charming lips. [*Drawing near her with ridiculous ceremony. A bell rings violently.*]

Pru.

IN HIS CHARIOT? 3

Pru. Confusion! away, away, away, begone, as quick as you can, or we're both ruin'd.

Wag. Ay! how! what the devil's the matter?

Pru. My master's bell, my master's bell. He rings again! down the back stairs, and let yourself out at the street door. I can't stay to talk to you any longer now—adieu.

Wag. [*As he's going off.*] Hey, what a ringing's here! one wou'd think the house was on fire.

S C E N E II.

AILWOU'D, who comes thro' the Back Scene in a Night-Gown and Flannel Cap, his Crutch in one Hand, and a small Bell in the other.

Ail. O lord, O lord, here's usage for a poor helpless sick man! There's nobody in the house sure; there can be nobody; they've all deserted me, and left me alone to expire without assistance. I made shift to muster up sufficient strength to crawl thus far; and now, I can die here. [*Drops into the arm chair with a piteous groan; then, after a short pause, starting and staring*] Mercy on me, what's the matter with me! I'm suddenly seiz'd with a shivering fit!—And now I burn like a red-hot coal of fire!—And now again—shiver, shiver, shiver, as if my blood was turn'd into snow-water! Prudence, Nancy, Mrs. Ailwou'd, love, wife! they're all deaf! and my bell is not loud enough neither. Prudence, I say.

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SCENE III.

AILWOU'D, PRUDENCE.

Pru. Here, Sir, here : what's the matter?

Ail. Ah, you jade, you slut.

Pru. [*Pretending to have hurt her head.*] The deuce take your impatience; you hurry people so, you have made me break my head against the window-shutter.

Ail. You baggage, you—'tis above an hour—

Pru. [*Crying.*] Dear me, how it smarts!

Ail. Above an hour that I have been wanting somebody.

Pru. Oh! Oh!

Ail. Hold your tongue, huffey, till I scold you.

Pru. Very pretty in troth, after the blow I have got.

Ail. You have left me to bawl and call till I'm hoarse again.

Pru. And you have made me get a great bump on my forehead; so put one against t'other and we're quit.

Ail. How, Mrs. Impudence!

Pru. If you scold, I'll cry.

Ail. To desert me in such a manner!

Pru. [*Crying*] Oh! Oh! Oh!

Ail. Are you at it again?—Why, you pert, brazen, audacious, provoking, abominable, insolent—Shan't I be allowed to have the pleasure of finding fault with you?

Pru. You may have that pleasure, if you will; and it's as fair that I shou'd have the pleasure of crying, if I like it.

Ail.

Ail. Well, well, I have done.—Take away these things, and get me my medicine. It's three hours and two minutes since I took it; and don't you know the prescription says every three hours? I feel the bad effects of my omission already.

Pru. Lord, Sir, why will you drench yourself with such nasty slops? One wou'd think the physicians and apothecaries cou'd find sufficient stuff for your craving bowels; but you must go to the quacks too; and this Doctor Last, with his universal balsamic restorative cordial, that turns water into asses milk.

Ail. That's a good girl, go on.

Pru. Methinks if one was to take physick, one wou'd rather chuse to go to a regular physician than to a quack.

Ail. And why so, my dainty adviser?

Pru. For the same reason that, if I wanted a pair of shoes, I wou'd rather go to an established shoemaker, than lay out my money at a Yorkshire warehouse.

Ail. If I hear any more of your impudence, I'll break your head to some purpose, it shan't be a bump in the forehead will serve you.

Pru. Eh, you old fanciful, foolish——

Ail. Go and call my daughter Nancy to me, I have something to say to her.

Pru. She's here, Sir.

SCENE

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SCENE IV.

AILWOU'D, PRUDENCE, NANCY.

Ail. Come here, Nancy; I want to speak with you.

Nan. What's your pleasure, Sir?

Ail. Stay; before I say or do any thing further, I'll go into the next room and take my medicine—I should be a great fool to forget that.

Pru. Ay, Sir, so you wou'd.

Ail. I should, indeed, for it does me a prodigious deal of good; though I must take a little cooling physick too, in order to correct the juices.

SCENE V.

NANCY, PRUDENCE.

Nan. Prudence.

Pru. Madam.

Nan. Look on me a little.

Pru. Well, I do look on you.

Nan. Prudence.

Pru. Well, what would you have with Prudence?

Nan. Can't you guess?

Pru. Some discourse, I suppose, about our new acquaintance, Mr. Hargrave; for you have done nothing but talk of him for this week past.

Nan. And can you blame me for the good opinion I have of him?

Pru. Who says I do?

Nan. Or would you have me insensible to the tender protestations which he makes me?

Pru.

Pru. Heav'n forbid.

Nan. Pr'ythee tell me now, Prudence, don't you really think there was something of destiny in the odd adventure that brought us acquainted?

Pru. Certainly.

Nan. Was there not something uncommonly brave and gentleman-like in that action of rescuing me without knowing any thing of me?

Pru. Very genteel and gentleman-like, indeed.

Nan. And was it possible for any one to make a more generous use of it?

Pru. Impossible.

Nan. Then, Prue, he has a most charming person.—Don't you think so?

Pru. Who can think otherwise?

Nan. Something very noble in his air?

Pru. Very noble.

Nan. Then he talks like an angel.

Pru. Ay, and writes like an angel too, I dare swear, ma'am; as this letter will shew.

Nan. From Mr. Hargrave! You wicked girl, why wou'd you keep it from me so long?

[Snatches it from her and reads it to herself]

Pru. Well, ma'am, what does the gentleman say?

Nan. Every thing, dear Prue; every thing in the world that I cou'd wish or desire. He says he can't live happy without me, and that he will, by the means of a common friend, immediately make a formal proposal for me to my father.

Pru. But do you think ma'am, that your father will listen?

Nan. He can have no objection, Prudence.

Pru. No, ma'am; but your mother-in-law may, who governs him, and, I'm sure bears you

8 DOCTOR LAST

you no good will. The best joke is, she thinks she has wheedled me into her interests——

Nan. Hush! here's my father.

S C E N E VI.

PRUDENCE, NANCY, AILWOU'D.

Ail. Nancy child, I have a piece of news to tell you, that, perhaps, you little expect. Here's a match proposed to me for you. You smile at that! Ah, nature, nature! By what I perceive then, I need not ask you if you are willing?

Nan. I am ready to submit to your commands in every thing, Sir.—Dear Prue, this is beyond my hopes.

Pru. Mr. Hargrave has kept his word, madam.

Ail. What are you whispering about?

Nan. Nothing, Sir.

Ail. Well, child, at any rate I am glad to find you in so complying a disposition: for, to tell you the truth, I was resolved on the thing before I mentioned it to you, and had even given my word to put it as expeditiously as possible into execution.

Pru. I am sure you are very much in the right of it, Sir; it's the wisest thing you ever did in your life.

Ail. I have not seen the gentleman yet, but I am told he will be every way to the satisfaction of us both.

Nan. That, Sir, I am certain of, for I have seen him already.

Ail.

Ail. Have you?

Nan. Since your consent, Sir, encourages me to discover my inclinations, you must know that good fortune has lately brought us acquainted; and, that the proposal which has been made to you is the effect of that esteem which, at the first interview, we conceived for one another.

Ail. That's more than I knew, but no matter; the smoother things go on, the better I am pleased.—He is but a little man I am told.

Nan. He's well made, Sir.

Ail. Agreeable in his person?

Nan. Very agreeable.

Ail. In his address?

Nan. Perfectly elegant.

Ail. Really that's much—Very much upon my word, that a man of low birth, and bred up to a mean profession—for, tho' the doctor has now fifteen thousand pounds in the funds, and gets eight or nine hundred a year, he owes all to his medicinal secrets.

Nan. Sir!

Ail. At least so Mr. Trash, the bookseller that vends his medicines, tells me; thro' whose mediation, indeed, this proposal is made.

Nan. Mr. Trash! Has Mr. Hargrave any thing to do then—

Ail. Hargrave! who the devil's he? I am talking of the person you are to marry, Dr. Last, whose cordial has done me so much service. It seems he is a widower, and has a mind to get a second wife that may do him some credit; such as his worldly circumstances intitle him to.

Nan. Well, but my dear Sir—

Ail. Yes, child, I know it's very well—The doctor is to be brought here to day to be introduced

roduced to me, and I am really concern'd that I appointed Dr. Coffin, Dr. Skeleton, and Dr. Bulruddery, to hold a consultation upon my case this morning; for I have found so much benefit from Dr. Last's medicine, that I think he will be the properest person to find out what's the matter with me.

Nan. Well but, Sir, give me leave to tell you that Dr. Last was very far from my thoughts when we began this conversation. In short, papa, all this while you have been talking of one person and I of another.

Pru. Poh, poh, madam, make yourself easy, my master can have no such ridiculous design as he has been mentioning to you——Marry a young lady of family and fortune to a scoundrel quack!

Ail. And what business have you to be meddling, impudence?

Pru. No business at all, Sir——But, if you are really serious in your design about this marriage, give me leave to ask you, what can have put it into your head?

Ail. You have nothing to do with that——I have told the girl the party I propose for her is rich; but, if you must know what most inclin'd, and, indeed, determin'd me, as it were, to accept of Dr. Last for a son-in-law, is the number of invaluable secrets he possesses; and this alliance will intitle me to take his medicines gratis, as my various infirmities may require—a thing that we ought all to consider, my last year's apothecary's bill amounting to two hundred and nineteen pounds, four shillings and eleven pence.

Pru.

IN HIS CHARIOT. 11

Pru. A very pretty reason for marrying your daughter to a quack indeed! —But, after all, Sir, tell me, upon your honour, now, does any thing ail you?

Ail. Eh! how! any thing ail me!

Pru. Ay Sir, are you sick in earnest; and, if so, what's the matter with you?

Ail. It's my misfortune not to know—Wou'd to Heav'n I did. But, to cut short all these impertinences, look you, daughter, I lay my commands upon you to prepare yourself to receive the husband I propose for you.

Pru. And I, madam, on my part command you to have nothing to do with him. [*going off.*]

Ail. Why, you impudent slut, shall a chambermaid take the liberty—

Pru. She shan't marry the quack.

Ail. Shan't she! we'll see that, if I get near enough to lay my cane across your shoulders.

[*Rising in a fury.*]

Nan. Dear Sir—

Pru. Oh, don't hinder him, madam; give him leave to come; he's welcome to do his worst.

Ail. If I lay hold of you— [*Following her.*]

Pru. I say I won't let you do a foolish thing if I can help it. [*Getting behind a Chair.*]

Ail. Come hither, come hither, [*Still following her.*] Nancy, stop her there, don't let her pass.

Pru. I believe no father but yourself ever thought of such a thing.

Ail. Help me to catch her, daughter, or I'll never give you my blessing.

Pru. Never mind him, madam.

Ail. An audacious, impudent, insolent—

12 DOCTOR LAST

Pru. Ay, ay, you may abuse me if you please; but I won't give my consent to the match for all that.

Ail. Cockatrice, jade, slut, [*Chasing her round the stage.*] Oh, Oh, I can support no longer, she has kill'd, she has murder'd me. Falls into his chair.

Pru. Your humble Servant, sweet Sir—Come away, madam.

Ail. Love! Wife! Mrs. Ailwou'd!

S C E N E VII.

AILWOU'D, Mrs. AILWOU'D.

Mrs. Ail. How now!

Ail. Oh, lamb, lamb, come hither if you love me.

Mrs. Ail. What's the matter with my poor dear?

Ail. Help me, sweetest.

Mrs. Ail. I will help thee; what's the matter?

Ail. Lamb!

Mrs. Ail. Well, my heart!

Ail. They have been teasing and fretting me here out of the small portion of life and spirit I have left.

Mrs. Ail. No, sweet, I hope not. Who has anger'd thee?

Ail. That jade Prudence—She is grown more saucy and impudent than ever.

Mrs. Ail. Don't put yourself in a passion with her, my soul.

Ail. I don't believe I shall ever recover it.

Mrs. Ail. Yes, yes, compose yourself.

Ail.

IN HIS CHARIOT. 13

Ail. She has been contradicting me—

Mrs. Ail. Don't mind her.

Ail. And has had the impudence to tell me I'm not sick, when you know, my lamb, how it is with me.

Mrs. Ail. I know, my heart, very well, you are feeble and weak—Heav'n help thee!

Ail. That jade will bring me to my grave. She is the cause of half the phlegm I breed; and I have desired, a hundred and a hundred times, that you wou'd turn her off.

Mrs. Ail. My child, there are no servants but have their faults, and we must endure their bad qualities, that we may have the use of their good ones. However, I will give Mrs. Prudence a lecture for her impertinence, I assure you—Who's there? Prue, Prudence, I say.

S C E N E VIII.

AILWOU'D, MRS. AILWOU'D, PRUDENCE.

Pru. Did you call me, madam? [*very demurely.*]

Mrs. Ail. Come hither, mistress—What is the meaning that you fret and thwart your master, and put him into passions?

Pru. Who, I, madam! Bless my soul, I don't know what you mean: I'm sure, my study, morning, noon, and night, is how to please and obey him.

Ail. Don't believe her, my dear; she's a liar; she neither pleases nor obeys me, and has behaved in the most insolent manner.

Mrs. Ail.

14 DOCTOR LAST

Mrs. Ail. Well, my soul, I'm sure what you say is right; but compose yourself.—Look you, Prudence, if ever you provoke your master again, I'll turn you out of doors.—Here give me his pillows, and help me to settle him in his chair—He sets I know not how—Pull your night-cap over your ears, my dear. There's nothing gives people cold so much as letting wind in at their ears.

Ail. Ah, my love, I shall never be able to repay all the care you take of me.

Mrs. Ail. Raise yourself a little, that I may put this under you—this behind your back—and this to lean your head upon.

Pru. And this to cover your brains.

[Claps a pillow rudely on his head.]

Ail. You cursed jade, do you want to stifle me?

[Gets up in a passion, throws the pillows at her, and drives her out.]

S C E N E IX.

AILWOU'D, *Mrs. AILWOU'D.*

Mrs. Ail. Hold, hold, what did she do to you?

Ail. Do to me! the serpent.—She'll be the death of me if you continue to keep her in the house.

Mrs. Ail. Well but, jewel, you are too apt to flurry yourself.

Ail. My sweet, you are the only comfort I have; and, in order to requite your tenderness, in the best manner I am able, I have resolv'd, as I have told you, to make my will.

Mrs. Ail.

IN HIS CHARIOT. 15

Mrs. Ail. Ah, don't talk to me in that manner, don't Mr. Ailwou'd, I beseech you, unless you have a mind to break my heart.

Ail. Alas, my love, we are all mortal; but don't cry, Biddy, for you'll make me weep too.

Mrs. Ail. Oh! oh! oh!

Ail. Nay, dearest——

Mrs. Ail. You said something of your will, didn't you?

Ail. I desir'd you wou'd speak to your attorney about it.

Mrs. Ail. Yes; but I cannot speak to him about any such thing; it wou'd cut me to the heart.

Ail. It must be done, Biddy.

Mrs. Ail. No, no, no.—However, I have desired him to come hither to day, and you may speak to him about it yourself.

Ail. I wou'd fain be inform'd in what manner I may cut off my children, and leave all to you.

Mrs. Ail. Alas, my dear, if you shou'd be taken away, I'll stay no longer in the world.

Ail. My only concern, when I die, will be that I never had a child by you; and Dr. Bulruddery, the Irish physician, promis'd me I should have twins.

Mrs. Ail. But do you think, my dear, that you will be able to cut off your two daughters and leave me all?

Ail. If not my landed estate, at any rate I can leave you my ready money; and, by way of precaution, I will make over to you immediately, four thousand pounds which I have in the three per cents, and bonds for near the same sum, which I lent to Sir Timothy Whisky.

Mrs.

16 DOCTOR LAST

Mrs. Ail. I will have nothing to do with them, indeed, Mr. Ailwou'd; you shan't put them into my hands I assure you; all the riches in the world will be nothing to me if I lose you.—How much do you say you have in the three per cents?

Ail. Four thousand pounds, my love.

Mrs. Ail. To talk to me of money when I am depriv'd of the only person with whom I cou'd enjoy it!—And how much more in bonds?

Ail. About the same sum, sweet—but don't take on so Biddy, pray now don't, you'll throw yourself into some illness; and to have us both sick—

S C E N E X.

AILWOU'D, Mrs. AILWOU'D, PRUDENCE.

Prud. Sir, there are the three doctors below, in the parlour, that were to call upon you this morning.

Ail. Ay, they are come to consult upon my case. I'm sorry I spoke to them, but it's too late now.

Prud. And there's another gentleman at the door, in a chariot, with Mr. Trash, the book-feller, who desired me to tell you he had brought Doctor Last.

Ail. I hope the gentleman in the parlour did not see him.

Prud. No, Sir, no.

Ail. Very well, then shew the physicians up.—Do you, my love, go and entertain Dr. Last till I can come to you.—I will dispatch these as soon as I can, but one must keep up the forms of civility.

SCENE

S C E N E XI.

AILWOU'D, Dr. COFFIN, Dr. SKELETON, Dr.
BULRUDDERY.

Coff. Mr. Ailwou'd, your servant. I have obey'd your commands, you see, ; and am come, with my brothers Skeleton and Bulruddery, to have a consultation upon your case.—How do you find yourself this morning?

Ail. Pray, gentlemen, be seated.—Why, really, doctor, I find myself but very indifferent.

Skel. How do you sleep, Sir?

Ail. Very indifferently, doctor ; chiefly broken slumbers.

Bulrud. And pray, how is your appetite?

Ail. Indifferent, very indifferent, indeed. I have made shift to get down a couple dishes of chocolate this morning in bed ; about two hours after I had some tea and toast with my wife ; just now I swallow'd, with much difficulty, a basin of soup ; and I believe I shall hardly take any thing more till dinner.

Skel. But, Mr. Ailwou'd, what are your chief complaints?

Ail. Really, doctor, I am afraid my disorder is a complication. Sometimes I think it is the gout, sometimes the rheumatism, sometimes the dropsy, and sometimes I feel myself in a high fever : however, gentlemen, Doctor Coffin here has been long my good friend and physician, and, by the help of the intelligence he can give you about my constitution, your art and experience may perhaps enable you to find out what's

D

the

18 DOCTOR LAST

the matter with me; so I leave you to your consultation. Gentlemen your servant. [*Ailwou'd seeing the doctors as he goes out, drops a guinea.*] Stay, doctor, I'll take it up for you.

Skel. Sir, I thank you;—but, I think, there was another dropt?

Ail. No, there was'nt.

Skel. Why,—I have but two.

Ail. But two! —Oh! Oh! [*gives him another.*]

S C E N E XII.

Dr. COFFIN, Dr. SKELETON, Dr. BULRUDDERY, sitting down with great ceremony; then, after a short silence,

Skel. Brother Coffin, shall I trouble you for a pinch of your—(*taking snuff*) Havannah, I see. *Coff.* Brought me from thence by a captain, who assisted in taking the place.

Skel. (*Sneezes*) Devilish strong.

Bulrud. I have often, Dr. Skeleton, had it in my head to ask some of the faculty, what can be the reason that when a man happens to sneeze all the company bows?

Skel. Sneezing, Dr. Bulruddery, was a mortal symptom that attended a pestilential disease, which formerly depopulated the republic of Athens; ever since, when that convulsion occurs, a short ejaculation is offered up, that the sneezing or sternuting party, may not be afflicted with the same distemper.

Bulrud. Upon my conscience, a very learned account! ay, and a very civil institution too. I can't help thinking, doctor, but the gentlemen
of

of our profession must arrive much better in them there foreign parts, than at home: now, because why, one hears of plagues and pestilences, and such like kind of disorders that attack a whole nation at once. Now, here, you know, we are obliged to pick up patients one by one, just as a body can get them.

Coff. Ay, doctor; and, since the great increase of this town, the sick lie so scattered, that one pair of horses are scarce sufficient for a physician but in moderate practice.

Skel. True; why, there was yesterday, the first pulse I felt belonged to a lad with the measles, in Dean's yard, Westminster: from thence I set out between seven and eight, my wig fresh powdered, and my horses in spirits; I turned at Charing-Cross for the New Buildings; then run through the Holbourn division, crossed the Fleet-market, and penetrated into the city as far as Whitechapel; then, made a short trip to the wife of a salesman, who had the gout in her stomach, at Wapping; from thence, returned through Cornhill, Temple-Bar, and the Strand, and finished my last prescription, between five and six, for a tradesman in Cockspur-street, who had burst a vein in hallooing at the Brentford election.

Bulrad. Upon my conscience, a long tour.

Skel. Long! Why, upon the most moderate calculation, I could not, before I sat down to my soup, have run up less than thirty pair of stairs; and my horses must have trotted, taking in cross-streets and turnings, at least, eighteen miles and three quarters.

Bulrad. Without doubt. But you was talking of Brentford.—Don't you look upon a con-

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tested election as a good thing to the faculty, doctor.

Skel. If you mean to us of the college, Dr. Bulruddery, little or nothing: if, indeed, there should happen to be warm work at the hustings, the corporation of surgeons may pick up some practice, tho' I don't look upon any of these public transactions as of any great use to our body, in general. Lord-mayor's day, indeed, has its merit.

Coff. Yes; that turns to account.

Skel. Dr. Doseum and I, were making t'other morning, at Barton's, a short calculation of what value that festival might be to the whole physical tribe,

Bulrudd. Is it a secret to what you made it amount?

Skel. Why; what with colds caught on the water before dinner, repletion and indigestion at dinner, inebriety after dinner, (not to mention the ball in the evening) we made that day, and its consequences, for you know, there are fine foundations laid for future disorders, especially if it turns out an easterly wind.—

Bulrudd. Does that make any difference?

Skel. Infinite;—for when they come out of the hall, in a fine perspiration, from the heat of the room, and exercise, should the wind miss them in crossing Cateaton Street, its sure to lay hold of them in turning the corner into Cheap-side.—

Coff. Without doubt,

Skel. We estimated the whole profit to physicians, surgeons, apothecaries, chymists, drug-gists, and nurses, at eleven thousand six hundred seventy-three pounds fourteen shillings and three pence three farthings.

SCENE

SCENE XIII.

Dr. COFFIN, Dr. SKELETON, Dr. BULRUDDERY, and AILWOU'D.

Ail. Gentlemen, I beg pardon for this interruption; but you have been consulting upon my case, and I have some particular reasons for coming thus suddenly, to desire to know what opinion you have yet been able to form?

Coff. (*To Skeleton.*) Come, Sir.

Skel. No, Sir; pray do you speak.

Coff. Before my senior! pray excuse me.

Skel. (*To Bulruddery.*) Doctor—

Bulrud. The devil burn myself if I do.

Ail. Nay; pray, gentlemen, leave these ceremonies; and, if you have been able to form any opinion—instruct me.

Coff. Why, really Sir, to tell you the truth—Brother Skeleton.

Skel. We have not yet, with all the observations we have been able to make upon your case and complaints—I say, Sir, —and, after the most abstruse disquisitions, we have not as yet been able—to form any opinion at all.

Ail. Well, this is all I want to be acquainted with; because, if you have not been able to form any opinion, I have been happy enough to meet with a physician that has.—Pray, Sir, do me the favour to walk in here.

SCENE

SCENE XIV.

Dr. COFFIN, Dr. SKELETON, Dr. BULRUDDERY,
AILWOU'D, Dr. LAST.

Ail. This, gentlemen, is Dr. Last; and he assures me, that my disorder is a confirmed jaundice.

Doctors. A jaundice!—ha, ha, ha.

D. Last. What do you grin at?—I says, he has the janders, and I'll uphold it.—I'll lay you fifty pounds he has the janders, and the gentleman shall hold the stakes himself.

Coff. Well, but, Mr. Ailwou'd, this, is altogether ridiculous. Did you ever see a man of your colour with the jaundice?

Ail. Why, that's true; (*turning to Last.*) every one tells me that I have a very florid complexion; now the jaundice gives a yellow hue: will you be so good as to explain that?

D. Last. Well, so I can, but not for the doctors.—If I does it, its all intirely to oblige you.

Skel. We shall hear how the impudent rascal will bring himself off.

D. Last. There are two sorts of janders; the yallar, and the grey.

Bulrudd. The black, I believe you mean honey.

D. Last. No, I don't.

Coff. But you must, Sir; there is no such thing as the grey jaundice.

Skel. Oh! gentlemen, the doctor means the iron-grey, and that's almost black, you know.

D. Last.

D. *Last*. They only does this to put me out now, because I'm no collegion.

Ail. Well, pray, doctor, go on with your explanation.

D. *Last*. Well, I says then; (*To Ailwou'd, who turns about for something*) I won't talk without you minds;—the yallar janders, I say, is,—the yallar janders is, as if so be—

Coff. Why, you were talking of the grey jaundice this moment.

D. *Last*. No I was'nt, I did'nt say a word of the grey janders.—Did I, Mr. Ailwou'd?—It's the yallar janders.—I knows well enough what I'm about, if you'll let me alone.

Coff. Well, what of the yallar janders?

D. *Last*. Why, I won't tell you.—I won't say a word more now; if you thinks to profit you're mistaken; yon shan't learn nothing from me.

Coff. You're a bloody impudent fellow.

D. *Last*. I does my cures no purchase no pay; and which of you can say that?—(*turning to Ailwou'd.*) Many a one of them comes to ax my advice and assistance, when they don't know what to do themselves.

Coff. Come, come, friend, we know you.

D. *Last*. Well, and I knows you.—Pray, Dr. Coffin, did'n't you attend one Mrs. Greaves, a tallow chandler's widow, that lodg'd at the pork shop in Fetter-lane; and didn't she send for me after you gave her over?

Coff. Yes; and she died in two days.

D. *Last*. Well,—so she did;—but that was no fault of mine, she shou'd have sent for me first. What could I do for her, after you had kill'd the poor dear soul?

Coff.

Coff. But, Mr. Ailwou'd, we are come here to consult upon your case; and if you permit us, we are willing.

Ail. O! nothing I desire so much; and to assist you, I'll leave this gentleman; he may give you further reasons for what he advances.

Skel. What, Sir do you think we'll consult with a quack?

Balrud. Ay, do you think we'll be after consulting with a quack?

D. Last. I'm no quack.—I have been regularly submitted, and I'll persecute you for your words in Westminster-hall.

Coff. Mr. Ailwou'd, we are your humble servants.

Ail. Well, but, gentlemen, your fees; you'll return them, I hope.

Coff. Return our fees, Sir!

Balrud. Return our fees! Arrah, is the man mad?

Skel. Sir, it is a thing entirely out of the course of practice. We wish you a good morning.

SCENE XV.

Ailwou'd, Last.

Ail. Why then, gentlemen, your servant, and good morning to you. Let them go, I'm glad we have got rid of them at any rate.

D. Last. Here, you Coffin—

Ail. Pray let him alone now.

D. Last. I would send him a challenge, if I was not afraid of being committed.

Ail. A challenge! Why, did you ever fight?

D. Last. Yes; I had like to be killed two or three times, but I never was.

Ail.

IN HIS CHARIOT.

Al. It was very well for me, I'm sure.

D. Laß. You must think they all hates me, because I out-does 'em in curing, and they are ostentatious in their own way, and won't be ham'd.

Al. And so, doctor, you are really of opinion that I have a disposition to the jaundice?

D. Laß. Yes, you have, and it's one of the six and twenty disorders specified in my advertisement; and I challenge all England to do the like, to cure six and twenty disorders with one medicine, without confinement, or hinderance of business, or knowledge of a bedfellow. You understand me, for that's in it too, if you have any remains lurking in your blood from bad treatment.

Al. No, no; Heaven be thank'd, I never had any such thing in my life.

D. Laß. So much the better for you; but if you had, I cou'd soon set you to rights again.—Why, there was three affidavys in the paper as last Wednesday, acknowledging benefits receiv'd from me; one from a journeyman taylor, bed-ridden with the rheumatiks; another, from a hackney-coachman, that had been three times tapp'd for the dropsey; and one from a child's mother that I cur'd of the dry gripes.

Al. Well, doctor, if you will now come into the next room, I will introduce you to my daughter.

D. Laß. What! in this trim? I wou'd not for fifty guineas—besides, I'm going to see a gentlewoman that I've got in hand for an impostor;—but I'll tell you what I'll do—I'll dress myself, and come to you in the evening.

Ail. Well, do so then, if it be more convenient to you;—but stay, doctor, your paper of directions orders your medicine to be taken only every three hours; now, as I have some spare time on my hands, suppose I was to take in the intervals, a mug or two of the Dog and Duck water, or Islington Spa, or Bagnigewells, by way of diluting.

D. Last. You mustn't take nothing by way of dissolution, but a few broth made with vermin's jelly.

Ail. Have you any objection then to my going to Chelsea, to be fumigated at Domini-cetti's?

D. Last. Domini Devil's! don't go near him. Is it to be sweated you wants? If that be all, I can sweat you myself. Do you chuse to be sweated?

Ail. Why, if I thought it wou'd do me any good.

D. Last. Well, I'll consider of it;—but, remember, Mr. Ailwou'd, I have taken you in hand now, and if you go to be purged, or puked, or buy a sup of phylic from any one else;—but, I suppose, you knows better what belongs to the charakter of a gentleman?

End of the First Act.

ACT

ACT II. SCENE I.

Another room in Ailwou'd's House. PRUDENCE
followed by HARGRAVE.

Pr. COME, Sir, follow me, I'll venture
to bring you in, since you've ven-
tured to knock at the door.

Har. But tell me, my best girl, cannot you
contrive to make me happy in the sight of your
charming mistress?

Pr. No, Mr. Hargrave, I cannot, indeed;
you have been told so a thousand times already:
I sent you word so by your seryant this morn-
ing, but you won't be satisfied; and, as if you
had not been imprudent enough already, you
are now come here in person, to put the finish-
ing stroke to our ruin.

Har. No, my good Prue, I was aware of
that, and did not come here in my own charac-
ter, but as a friend of your young lady's Italian
master, who has given me leave to say he has
sent me in his place.

Pr. That's more foresight than I thought you
capable of. — But why have you been so negli-
gent; did not you tell my mistress, that you
wou'd make a formal proposal to her father?

Har. True — Nor is it my fault that it has not
been done; I spoke to Mr. Friendly, Mr. Ail-
wou'd's brother-in-law, who assured me he wou'd
make it his business to come here this day for
that purpose.

Pr. Ay; but this day is too late, it shou'd
have been done yesterday; for now her father

THE DOCTOR AND THE SUT

is going to marry her to another person—A rascal quack—Tho', I think, if we could set my master against him, which would be no very hard matter—

Her. All how shall I do now?

Pro. I don't know any method so sure, as by the help of another quack; for he falls in love with every new medicine he hears of.

Her. Say you so? Gad, I have a good comical fellow for my servant, and there is a thought come into my head—

Pro. Hush! here's my master, step into the next room a little, while I prepare him for your reception. I cannot, I cannot.

SCENE II.

PROBNER and ALLWORTH.

All. Dr. Last directed me during the operation of his medicine to shooen or twelve coins about the room; but I forgot to ask him what that it would be most efficacious in the long way, or the broad way. I wish I had ask'd him that.

Pro. Sir, here is a—
All. Speak low, he'll hear you are enough to shock my brains. You don't consider, that it is not fit to bawl in the ears of sick people.

Pro. I was going to tell you, Sir—

All. Speak low, I say.

Pro. Sir, (Speaks so low as not to be heard.)

All. Eh! what's that?

Pro. I was going to tell you—(very low.)

All. What is it you say?

Pro. (very low) I say, here's a man without wants to speak with you.

All.

IN HIS CHARIOT.

Ail. Well, you devil, let him come in.

Prs. [As loud as she can shout.] Come in Sir.

Ail. Oh, my head, my head!

SCENE III.

Ailwou'd, Prudence, Harpaze.

Har. Mr. Ailwou'd—

Prs. Don't speak so loud, for fear of shocking my master's brains.

Har. I am very glad to find you out of bed, and to see that you grow better.

Prs. What do you mean by growing better?—it's false, my master's always very ill.

Har. I don't know how that may be—but I was told he was better; and I think he looks pretty well.

Prs. Poh, you're blind, he looks as bad as possible; and they are impertinent people, that say he mends: he grows worse and worse.

Ail. She's in the right of it.

Prs. He walks, eats, and drinks like other men; but, that's no reason why he shou'd not be in a bad state of health.

Ail. 'Tis very true.

Har. I can only say then, Sir, that I am extremely sorry for your indisposition; and hope you will soon get the better of it.

Ail. And, now compliments are past, Sir—Pray may I take the liberty to desire to know who you are?

Har. Sir, I come here on the part of Miss Ailwou'd's Italian master; who is gone for some time into the country, and sends me, being his intimate

THE DOCTOR LAST

intimate friend, and continue her lessons, lest, by interrupting them, she should forget what she has already learned.

Ail. Very well; call Nancy.

Prv. I believe, Sir, it will be better to take the gentleman into her chamber.

Ail. No, let her come here.

Prv. He can't give her her lesson so well, if he is not alone with her.

Ail. I warrant you. —

Prv. Besides, it will only disturb you in the condition you are in, to have people talking in the room.

Ail. Leave that to me. — Here is my daughter. — Run you, nigger, out of my sight, and let me know when Dr. Last comes, and let me know when Dr. Last comes, and let me know when Dr. Last comes.

SCENE IV

Prv. You're blind, he looks as bad as I do. — *Mr. D. Hargrave, Nancy.*

Ail. Nancy my dear, your Italian master is gone into the country, and has sent a gentleman to teach you in his room.

Nan. Oh, heaven's sake!

Ail. What's the matter? — Why this astonishment? — I can only say that, Sir, that I can only say that.

Nan. Because, papa, —

Ail. Because, what?

Nan. Lord, Sir, the most surprising thing happens here!

Ail. So it seems, indeed.

Nan. I dream't last night, papa, that I was in a crowd coming out of a play-house, where a rude fellow attempted to lay hold of me; when a gentle-

a gentleman, exactly like this, came to my assistance, and rescu'd me from the russian's hands; and I am so surpriz'd, papa, to see before me the very same person I fancy'd in my dream—

Ail. Did you ever hear such an idiot as it is?

Har. I count myself extremely fortunate, madam, to have employ'd your thoughts either sleeping or waking; and shou'd esteem myself particularly happy, to relieve you from any distress which accident might throw you into: for, I assure you, madam—

Ail. Why, now, Sir, you are rather more foolish than she—But, pray have done with your nonsense, both the one and other; and you, Sir, if you please, give the girl her lesson.

Har. You know, ma'am, a great man formerly said, that if he spoke to the gods, he wou'd speak Spanish; to men, French; but to women, Italian, as the properest language for love.

Ail. A strange round-a-bout way of beginning.

Har. If he was to speak to his horse, indeed, he said he wou'd speak in High Dutch; as for example, *Das dick der donder schalq.*

Ail. So, you won't have done fooling.

Har. Pray, Sir, give me leave; every master has his method—No doubt, madam, you have been inform'd, that the adjective must agree with the substantive, as thus—*Nanetta bella*, beautiful Nancy, [*softly to her*] that is you my charmer—*Amante fidele*, faithful lover, [*softly to her*] That's me, my charmer, who doat upon you more than life. [*Ail wou'd coming close to listen, Hargrave raises his voice.*] Now these, ma'am, must agree in gender, number, and case.

Ail.

DOCTOR LAST

Al. Ay, that's right enough; I remember that when I was learning grammar myself.

Har. Come, madam, we'll take a verb active, and begin if you please, I with Amo, to love—Have you any objection to that?

Nan. By no means, Sir.

Har. Then pray give a little attention, and conjugate after me, that you may catch the accent—Io amo, I love.

Nan. Io amo, I love.

Har. O fy! that's not a proper tone.—You'll pardon me for reprimanding miss before you.

—you must pronounce the words with more tenderness, ma'am: take notice of me—Io amo I love.

Nan. (*Very tenderly.*) Io amo, I love.

Al. I won't have her pronounce it any more; I don't know what words you'll have the impudence to teach her presently.

SCENE V.
AIRWOU'D, HARGRAVE, NANCY, PROVIDENCE.

Prov. Sir, give me leave.

Al. What now?

Prov. Might I speak with you, Sir?

Al. Speak with me!

Prov. If it won't disturb you, Sir.

Al. A curst light on you, what is it you want?

Prov. To ask you something, Sir, if you won't be in a passion.

Al. Well, tell us.

Prov. Lord, Sir, you does not know how to take you, you really frighten me out of my wits.

Al.

IN HIS CHARIOT. 33

Ail. She won't speak now.

Pru. Yes, Sir, I—will speak (*altering her tone.*) there's doctor Last below as fine as a mounta-bank.

Ail. Daughter go into your chamber; and I must beg of you, Sir, to take your leave; and pray let your friend know, that neither he, nor his substitute, need continue their visits for the future.

Har. [*Aside*] Well, my good old gentleman, you shall hear from me again sooner than you imagine; for, since the way has been pointed out to me, I will make a bold push to drive this quack out of the house.

S C E N E VI.

AILWOU'D, PRUDENCE, and DOCTOR LAST,
dress'd in a tawdry manner, followed by a black boy.

D. Last. An impudent rascal has thrown a dead cat into my chariot, and hit me such a douse on the nose, besides splashing me!

Ail. Doctor Last—

D. Last. Mr. Ailwou'd—Sir, I pay you my compliments—Pompey bring the carriage for me at six o'clock—and, do you hear, call at Coven-Garden Market for the yerbs, and put them into the boot.

Ail. Upon my word! (*admiring Last*) Lord, Lord, what an advantage dress is!

D. Last. To tell you the truth, I got this suit of cloaths a bargain: they belong'd to a gentleman as died under my hands.

F

Ail.

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Ail. Prudence, go and desire your young mistress to come hither.

Pru. Dr. Last—Sir, your most obedient.

Ail. You impudent, saucy—

SCENE VII.

AILWOU'D and LAST.

D. Last. Never mind her; Lord, she meant no harm—I'm too good natur'd to take notice of every trifle—I'm one of the best natur'd little fellows, I believe, that ever was born—Why I'm like a dog in my own house; I never troubles myself about nothing, all I desire is to see things handsome, and they give me whatever they please.

Ail. Well, I think my daughter will, in that respect, match you to a tittle, for she's as good natur'd a girl as lives.

D. Last. I'll tell you a thing you'll be glad to hear—I believe I shall come out with a new medicine in a day or two.

Ail. I'll take it—What is it?

D. Last. Essence of cucumber.

Ail. Of cucumber!

D. Last. Ay, for the heartburn.

Ail. I'm very often troubl'd with that disorder, but will it be good for nothing else?

D. Last. Yes, it will be good for the cramp.

Ail. I've had an odd pain in the ball of my foot all day, I don't know what it may turn to.

D. Last. I wish miss Nancy wou'd come, for I think we shou'd prove agreeable, and we'd fix things

things directly; I'll settle whatever you please upon her, for I have neither chick nor child but my old mother.

Ail. Here she is.

S C E N E VIII.

AILWOU'D, LAST, NANCY, PRUDENCE.

Ail. Nancy, this is Dr. Last.

D. Last. No offence, miss, I hope (*goes up and kisses her*;) I thinks, Mr. Ailwou'd, she's very much like you, only she wants a scrap of colour, but I'll give her a bottle of stuff when we're married, that in three doses will make her cheeks as red as a rose.

Ail. Why don't you speak to the Doctor, Nancy?

Nan. I don't know what to say, Sir.

D. Last. Let her alone, let her alone; we'll talk fast enough when we're better acquainted—I fancy, Mr. Ailwou'd, we shall have very fine children; I had three as beautiful babes, by my last spouse, as ever a woman brought into the world.

Ail. I hope they're dead doctor?

D. Last. Yes, yes, I told you so a bit a gone. Sweet pretty little angels, they all lies in Pancridge church-yard, with their poor dear mammy.

Ail. In Pancras church-yard!

D. Last. Yes, there's tomb-stones over every one of them.

Ail. Tomb-stones!

D. Last. Ay.

Ail. Is there tho'?

D. Last. Yes; what's the matter with you?

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Ail. Heigh ho!

D. Last. Have you got the cholic?

Ail. No.

Nan. Has any sudden illness seiz'd you, Sir?

Ail. No, only low spirits. I think some how, I shall be buried in Pancras church yard myself.

Pru. Lord, Sir, how can you take such things into your head?

Ail. I wish there had been no talk about tombstones.

Pru. Here's my lady.

S C E N E IX.

Dr. LAST, Mrs. AILWOU'D, AILWOU'D, PRUDENCE, NANCY.

Ail. Mrs. Ailwou'd, this is Dr. Last.

Mrs. Ail. I have seen the doctor before, my dear; but what's the matter with you, eh?

D. Last. Nothing, madam, nothing; he has only got a little fit of the horrors; let him alone, he'll come to himself again by and by.

Mrs. Ail. I hope, daughter-in-law, you are sensible of the goodness of this gentleman, in taking you without portion.

D. Last. Yes, yes, and I hope my parson proves agreeable to her. Have you seen my picture, miss, that's in the expedition room at Spring Gardens—every one says its monstrous like me. Take her to see it, do, it will cost but a shilling; you'll easily know it; its o'the same side with the image there—Venus the methodist, I thinks they calls it.

Ail.

Ail. Well, but, doctor, give me leave to ask you, and don't be offended at my being a little particular, on account of my girl; I know you have realiz'd something considerable; but, how have you laid out your money? Have you ever a scrap of land?

D. Laft. Why, as far as this here, there's my place by Hounslow, I bought it out and out, the whole concern costis me upwards of fifteen hundred pounds, with my pond and my pigeon-house, and—

Pru. Have you any fish in your pond, doctor?

D. Laft. No, my dear, it's not deep enough; besides, it's in the road, and I'm afraid they'd be stole; but, I have pigs, and pigeons, and next summer I shall make a new reproach to my house, with a fistula that will give us a view of all the gibbets upon the heath; then there's a large running ditch that I'll make into a turpentine river.

Ail. Come, Nancy, let me have the satisfaction of seeing you give your hand to Dr. Laft.

Nan. Sir—

Ail. Nay, nay, no coying.

Nan. Dear Sir, let me beg of you not to be so precipitate, but allow the gentleman and me sufficient time to know one another, and try if our inclinations are mutual.

D. Laft. My inclinations are mutual, Miss, and not to be chang'd; for the fire of love, as I may say, is shot from your beautiful eyes into my heart; and, I cou'd say more—If it was not out of respect to the company.

Mrs. Ail. Perhaps, my dear, Miss Nancy has fix'd her inclinations somewhere else, and, like a dutiful daughter, made a choice for herself.

Nan.

Nan. if I had, madam, it wou'd be such a one as neither reason or honour wou'd make me asham'd of.

Mrs. Ail. But, if I was in your papa's place, Miss, I wou'd make you take the person I thought proper for your husband, or I know what I'd do.

Nan. O, ma'am, nobody doubts your affection; but, perhaps, you may be baulk'd in the favour you design me.

Ail. Well, but, stay; methinks I make but a whimsical sort of a figure between you both.

Nan. The duty of a daughter, madam, is not unlimited; and there are certain cases to which neither law nor reason can make it extend.

Mrs. Ail. That is to say, you are very willing to be married, but you are not willing your father shou'd have any hand in the matter.

Ail. Dr. Last, I beg your pardon for all this.

D. Last. Let them go on, I likes to hear them.

Mrs. Ail. Your insolence is insufferable, child.

Nan. I am very sensible, madam, you wou'd be glad to provoke me to make you some impertinent answer; but I tell you before hand, I shall be careful not to give you that advantage over me.

Mrs. Ail. You don't know, my dear, that you are very silly.

Nan. 'Tis labour lost, madam; I shall make no answer.

Mrs. Ail. You have a ridiculous pride about you, a vain self sufficiency, which makes you shocking to every body.

Nan. I tell you, madam, once more, it won't do; I will preserve my temper in spite of you; and, to deprive you of all hopes of succeeding
against

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against me, I'll take myself out of your sight immediately.

Ail. Hearn'e, Nancy, no more words; resolve to marry this gentleman within three days, or I'll turn you out to starve in the streets.

S C E N E X.

Mrs. AILWOU'D, AILWOU'D, Dr. LAST.

Mrs. Ail. A little impudent saucy minx.

D. Last. She has a purdigious deal of tongue for such a young crater.

Ail. My lamb, don't make yourself uneasy about the baggage; I'll bring her to her senses, I'll warrant you.

Mrs. Ail. Indeed, my dear, you don't know how I'm shock'd at her behaviour.

Ail. Are you shock'd, love?

Mrs. Ail. Yes, that I am to the soul: I thought she wanted to insinuate that I did not love you, my dear; and any thing of that kind is worse to me than ten thousand daggers.

Ail. She's going to faint.

D. Last. Let me feel her pulse.

Ail. A glass of water here.

D. Last. No, no, give her a glass of cherry brandy; I'm no friend to drenching christians bowels with water, as if they were the tripe of a brute beast.

Mrs. Ail. Mr. Ailwou'd, permit me to go into my own room a little, to recover myself.

Ail. Do so, my love.

D. Last. And, do you hear, madam, take a dram as I bids you, a little rum and sugar, if
you

you have any in the house; that's what I generally swallows, and I always finds the good effects of it.

S C E N E XI.

AILWOU'D, *Dr. LAST*, PRUDENCE.

Ail. How now?

Pru. Sir, a gentleman, that says he comes from your brother, Mr. Friendly, desires to see you.

Ail. Who is he? What wou'd he have?

Pru. I don't know—He cuts a droll figure—Here he is, Sir.

Ail. Get out of the room.

S C E N E XII.

AILWOU'D, *Dr. LAST*, WAG, *in disguise*.

Wag. Sir, I'm your most obedient.

Ail. Your servant, Sir.

Wag. By what I perceive, Sir, I have not the honour to be known to you—My name is Scower, Sir; and I come recommended by your brother, Mr. Friendly, and study the practice of physick.

Ail. Sir, your servant.

Wag. I observe you look very earnestly at me, Sir; what age do you think I am of?

D. Last. Hold let me tell him;—What age are you of—You are about four and twenty, or thereabouts.

Wag.

Wag. By the Lord, I'm above fourscore.

D. Last. That's a damn'd lie, I'm sure.

Ail. Hold, doctor, perhaps he has liv'd all his life upon tincture of sage.

Wag. Sage! a fiddle! I have secrets myself that will keep me alive these hundred years.

D. Last. I suspect this is the soldier that lives in the Old Bailey. You'll see how I'll make him expose himself. You say you're a doctor; who made you so?

Wag. Sir, I am a travelling doctor, and, at present, have the honour of being physician in ordinary to one emperor, four kings, three electors, and I don't know how many prince palantines, margraves, bishops, and vulgar, highnesses; passing from town to town, from kingdom to kingdom, to find out patients worthy of my practice, and fit to exercise the great and noble secrets of my art. I scorn to amuse myself with the little fry of common distempers, the trifles of rheumatisms, scurvies, and megrims; give me your diseases of importance, good purple fevers, good pleurifies, with inflammations of the lungs: these are what please me; these are what I triumph over.

D. Last. Ax him, can he bleed and draw teeth?—I dare to say, he knows nothing of chirurgery.

Wag. Have you never heard of my black powder that is taken like snuff, and purges by the smell, provided that, at the same time, you swallow three large glasses of laxative tisan?

D. Last. Then, its the tisan that does it! Mark that. O! he's quite a cheat.

Wag. Let me feel your pulse.—Come, beat as you should do.—(*Feeling his pulse in a ridiculous manner; at the same time humming a tune.*)

Ail. Why, Sir, one wou'd think you were playing upon the spinnet.

Wag. Even so, Sir; for I do not, like other physicians, with a watch in my hand, determine the state of the pulse by that fallible measurer of time.

Ail. How then?

Wag. By a tune, which, I believe, you will allow to be a discovery new, and intirely my own: if the pulse moves in concert with the minuet in Ariadne, I am sure that the patient is well.—Let me see, Sir—Tol, lol, de-rol—There we dropp'd a crotchet; tol, lol, de-rol—There we mounted a minum; tol, lol, lol—and there a semi-demi quaver is missing.

Ail. A semi-demi quaver!

Wag. Stay!—Let me consider—two bars and a half—Who is your physician?

Ail. Doctor Last.

Wag. What! that little fellow?

D. Last. Little fellow! what do you mean by that?

Ail. Nay, gentlemen—

Wag. Come, come, let us mind our business. What does he say is the matter with you?

Ail. Why, Sir, he tells me I've got the jaundice.

Wag. He's an ass.

D. Last. Am I so!

Wag. Mr. Ailwou'd look in my face. (*Touching him here and there with his finger.*) How do you find yourself?

Ail. Why, I don't know; I find myself some ay odd.

Wag. Just as I suspected: you have got the dropsy.

Ail. Eh! the dropsy?

Wag.

Wag. Why, don't you see what a swell'd belly you have, and your eyes starting out of your head?

Ail. Really, doctor, I always thought you had mistaken my disorder.

D. Laft. He has no dropfy—he has not a sup of water in him. Let him be tapp'd to try; I'll stand to his tapping.

Wag. You are an ignoramus—Let us hear a little what are your complaints.

Ail. I have every now and then a pain in my head.

Wag. Dropfy.

Ail. Sometimes a mist before my eyes.

Wag. Dropfy.

Ail. Sometimes a violent palpitation at my heart.

Wag. Dropfy.

Ail. At other times, I am taken with a violent pain in my belly, as if it was the cholic.

Wag. Dropfy again.—You have a good appetite to what you eat?

Ail. Yes, Sir.

Wag. Dropfy—You love to drink a glass of wine?

Ail. Yes.

Wag. That's the dropfy—You take a comfortable nap after dinner?

Ail. True, Sir.

Wag. Dropfy! dropfy! dropfy!—All dropfy.

D. Laft. Well, if it be, can you cure him?

Wag. A quack like you wou'd say, ay; but I sincerely tell the gentleman at once, he's a dead man.

Ail. Then, the Lord have mercy on me!

Wag. That is, I mean he wou'd be dead in twenty-four hours, if I was not to help him; but I have the only remedy in the world for it.

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D. Last. Don't believe him; he's a cheat.

Ail. Give it to me; I'll take it, let it be what it will.

Wag. Then, observe, I don't desire a brass farthing without you're cur'd.

Ail. Look you there, doctor.

D. Last. Well, don't I do the same?

Wag. But, if you are cur'd, you must give me a hundred guineas.

Ail. You shall have the money.

D. Last. It's too much; I'll do it for five.

Wag. I have been at a great deal of pains and trouble, and made many experiments, in order to find a radical cure for this disease, that should be at once safe, cheap, and easy: my first invention was a pump; by means of which, fix'd in the belly of the patient, I meant to pump out the dropical humour, as you wou'd water out of the hold of a ship; threescore and eleven people died under the operation.

Ail. Well, what is the loss of a few individuals, for the general good of mankind? You brought it to perfection at last?

Wag. No; at last, I found it was impracticable; yet I wou'd have gone on in hopes, but people grew chicken-hearted, and wou'd not let me try.

D. Last. So they well might—You shou'd not pump me in that manner for five thousand pound.

Wag. Well, Sir, my next experiment was call'd the soaking operation; which was contrived thus: I made the patient swallow a piece of sponge, fasten'd to a string, which going down his throat into his stomach, I let lie there, till it had absorb'd or soak'd up the watery humours,

humours; and then, drew it up again, with all its contents; repeating the operation, till I had left the body as dry as an empty decanter.

Ail. Well, and what success?

Wag. Why, I had a great deal better success with this than the former; for, I think, it kill'd but four and twenty.

D. Laſt. Well, take my advice, Mr. Ailwou'd, neither be pump'd nor soak'd.

Wag. The gentleman has nothing to fear; what I shall make use of upon this occasion is, my great dryer, or essence infernalis.—You see this little phial.

D. Laſt. Let me see it—and I'll make bold to taste it too.—Don't touch it, Mr. Ailwou'd; don't touch it; its corroding supplement, and will throw you into a salvation.

Wag. Not a grain of mercury in it; upon my honour; nothing but simples!

Ail. Pray give the phial to me; I think I can distinguish; for I have taken a great many of these things.—I vow to man, it tastes to me like strong beer or porter!

Wag. (*Aside.*) By the Lord, he has guess'd it:—Observe me, Sir, it is a tincture drawn from rat's-bane, arsenic, laudanum, verdigrease, copperas, with a convenient mixture of the juice of hemlock. You see, Sir, I despise quackery; I tell you fairly what my medicines are.

D. Laſt. Medicines, do you call 'em?

Wag. Give it cat, dog, mouse, rat; or, in short, any creature, bypede or quadrupede, of the brute creation, they are immediately thrown into the most intolerable torments, swell like a tun, and burst before your eyes.

Ail. A fine medicine, indeed!

Wag.

Wag. Well, I will let you take the contents of this whole bottle; and, if it does you any more harm than so much new milk, I'll give you leave to knock me down.

Ail. Knock you down!

Wag. Nay, more; if you had infirmities from head to foot, the first dose will cure you of every one of them.

Ail. Yes, indeed, I believe it wou'd.

Wag. Tell me, Mr. Ailwou'd, what do you do with this arm?

Ail. My arm!

Wag. Take my advice, cut off this arm immediately.

Ail. The deuce! Cut off my arm!

Wag. It is the new method of practice that I mean to introduce. Don't we prune trees of their branches, to make them more healthy? And, don't you see that this arm draws all the nourishment to itself, and hinders the other from thriving?

Ail. Ay, but I have occasion for my arm.

Wag. Here's an eye too, which I wou'd have instantly pluck'd out, were I in your place.

Ail. Pluck out my eye!

Wag. Don't you see it injures the other, and occasions these mists you complain'd of but now. Be guided by me, and have it taken away directly; you'll see the better with your left.

D. Last. I tell you, Mr. Ailwou'd, this is some cheat.

Ail. I begin to suspect so.—Hark'e, firrah, who sent you here? Are you come to murder me?

Wag. Oh! Sir, if you're in a passion, your servant.

D. Last.

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D. Last. Ay, but you shan't get off so.—
Stop thief!

Wag. Nay, then, I must take to my heels.
(*Throws his wig at Last, and runs off.*)

Ail. Did you ever see such an impudent scoundrel?

D. Last. Do you keep the wig, we can swear to the wig, while I follow, and find out who he is—I'm almost sure he's the soldier in the Old Bailey, for he has a spite against me, and employs old women to tear down my advertisements.

S C E N E XIII.

AILWOU'D, FRIENDLY, PRUDENCE.

Ail. Ah! —I'm quite overcome, I can't support myself any longer.

Pru. Your brother, Mr. Friendly, Sir.

Friend. How now! What's the matter?

Ail. O! Mr. Friendly, your servant—but I wonder you are not ashamed to see my face: did you think my sickly habit would not put me out of the world soon enough, but you must join with wretches to drive me hence?

Friend. I don't understand you.

Ail. How could you send me that wicked monster, who, under the name of a doctor, wanted to give me poison; to cut off my arms, thrust out my eyes, and so make me blind and lame?

Friend. I never sent you any physician.

Ail. No:—he pretended he came by your commendation.

Friend.

Friend. He's some impostor—and, indeed, my dear brother, you lay yourself too open to the practice of such fellows, who are acquainted with your weakness, and take advantage of it.

Ail. My weakness is greater, indeed, as you may see.

Friend. How do you find your self to-day then?

Ail. Extremely ill, indeed.

Friend. How, extremely!

Ail. In a condition so faint and feeble, that I am not able to stir.

Friend. Indeed!

Ail. I have scarce strength enough to speak to you.

Friend. I'm heartily sorry for it, brother, because I came to talk to you upon a matter of consequence; no less than to propose a match for my niece.

Ail. (*Rises in a violent passion.*) Brother, don't talk to me of that hussy; she's an impudent ungrateful jade; I detest, I renounce her, and will own no body for my friend that speaks a word in her favour.

Friend. However, Brother, I'm glad to find that your strength returns a little, and that you have still got spirits enough to exert yourself: my visit has done you so much good, at least; and, to do you still more, I insist upon your coming with me into the garden immediately.

Ail. Into the garden

Friend. Ay; a walk there will do you good.

Ail. I have not been in the open air these two months.

Friend. So much the worse for you.

Pru.

Pru. So it is, Mr. Friendly. Do, Sir, be prevailed on by your brother.

Ail. I know I shall catch my death of cold.

Friend. I warrant you.

Ail. Well, come then. Prudence, give me my furr'd gown.

Friend. What! to go into the garden in the middle of July?

Ail. Ay, ay, I'll take care of myself, in spite of you all.

Pru. Get him out at any rate.—Here's your gown, Sir.

Ail. So—Let me wrap it close about me—Where are my flannel gloves?

Pru. Here, Sir.

Ail. Now, pull down my night-cap, and put on my hat.

Friend. Why, brother, you're wrapt up like a Russian courier, for a winter-journey into Siberia.

Ail. You may say what you please.—Here, Prudence, tie a handkerchief about my neck.

Friend. Is that necessary too?

Ail. Come, now, brother, I'll go with you, tho' I'm sure it will be the death of me. (*Going off.*)

Pru. Well; but, Sir—

Ail. What's the matter?

Pru. You forgot, Sir, that you can't walk without your cane.

Ail. That's true; give it me.

End of the Second Act.

H

SCENE

ACT III. SCENE I.

A room in AILWOU'D's House, with a Door in the Back Scene.

AILWOU'D, *Mrs.* AILWOU'D.

Ail. **W**HERE art thou going abroad my life?

Mrs. Ail. To the Temple, my dear; to Mr. Juggle, the lawyer, to desire him to come here and make your will, since you will have it so.

Ail. That's right, lamb, that's right—

Mrs. Ail. But an accident has happen'd, dearest, which I thought it my duty to inform you of before I went.—As I pass'd by your daughter Nancy's chamber, I saw a young fellow there, in earnest conference with her.

Ail. How! with my daughter!

Mrs. Ail. Yes, and I'm sure I saw the same young fellow, a little before, talking with your brother in the parlour.

Ail. And cou'd you overhear what she and the young fellow were saying together?

Mrs. Ail. No, sweetest; but your little daughter Polly was with them.

Ail. The child!

Mrs. Ail. Aye, the child, my dear—forward enough, of her age, I assure you; she knows as much at five, as I did at fifteen—But I dare swear you may get every thing out of her.

Ail.

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Ail. Go, pr'ythee, and send the little slut to me this instant.

Mrs. Ail. My dear, I will—Polly! your papa wants you.

Ail. Bye, Biddy—

S C E N E II.

AILWOU'D, POLLY.

Pol. Do you want me, papa?—My mamma says you want me.

Ail. Yes, huffey; come here;—nearer.—What do you turn away for?—Look me in the face.

Pol. Well, papa.

Ail. So—

Pol. What, papa?

Ail. Have you nothing to tell me?

Pol. What shou'd I tell you?

Ail. You know well enough, huffey.

Pol. Not I, indeed, and upon my word.

Ail. Is this the way you do what you're bid?

Pol. What?

Ail. Did not I order you to come and tell me immediately whatever you saw?

Pol. Yes, papa.

Ail. And have you done so?

Pol. Yes; I'm come to tell you every thing I've seen.

Ail. Very well.—What have you seen to day?

Pol. I saw my Lord Mayor go by in his coach.

Ail. And nothing else?

Pol. No; indeed, indeed.

Ail. I shall make you alter your tone a little, I fancy, if I fetch a rod.

Pol. Oh!! dear papa

Ail. You baggage, you, why don't you tell me, you saw a man in your sister's chamber?

Pol. Why, my sister bid me not, papa; but I'll tell you every thing.

Ail. Take care then, for I've a way of knowing all; and if you tell me a lie—

Pol. But pray, papa, don't you go and tell my sister that I told you.

Ail. Never fear.

Pol. Well then, papa, there came a man into my sister's chamber as I was there; I ask'd him what he wanted, and he told me he was her Italian master.

Ail. Oh! the matter's out then?

Pol. My sister came in afterwards.

Ail. Well, and what did your sister say?

Pol. Why, first the man kiss'd her.

Ail. Did he so?

Pol. Yes, two or three times, but she was not willing; and then she said to him, Go away; go away;—and she said, she was frighten'd out of her wits—and she said, she was afraid you wou'd come and catch her.

Ail. Well, and what then?

Pol. Why, he wou'dn't go away.

Ail. And—What did he say to her?

Pol. Say?—He said, I don't know how many things to her.

Ail. Ay; but what?

Pol. Why, he said this and that, and t'other;—he said, he lov'd her mightily, and that she was the prettiest creature in the world.

Ail. Well; and after that?

Pol.

IN HIS CHARIOT. 53

Pol. Why, after that, he took her by the hand.

Ail. And after that?

Pol. After that, he kiss'd her again.

Ail. And after that?

Pol. After that.—Stay;—O! after that, my mamma came, and he ran away.

Ail. And you saw no more?

Pol. No; indeed, and indeed, papa.

Ail. There's something, however, whispers in my ear that you have not told me all.—This little finger—

Pol. O that little finger's a story-teller.

Ail. Have a care.

Pol. Don't believe it, papa, it fibs indeed.

Ail. Well, get you gone then, and remember what I have said to you.

Pol. Yes, papa, yes, I'll remember.—I'm glad he didn't whip me; I was afraid he wou'd have whip'd me.

S C E N E III.

FRIENDLY, AILWOU'D.

Friend. Come, now, brother, I must insist upon it, that you will not put yourself in a passion; but sit down here, and let me resume the conversation which we just now broke off.

Ail. Well, come, let it be so.

Friend. You are to be cool now, remember.

Ail. Ay, ay, I'll be cool.

Friend. And to answer me without prevarication.

Ail. Good Lord; yes, here's a terrible pre-
amble sure.

Friend.

Friend. How comes it then, brother, give me leave to ask you once more, that, being in the circumstances you are, and having no other children but two daughters, you can entertain the strange design of marrying your eldest in the manner you are going to dispose of her.

Ail. Pray, brother, how comes it that I am master of my own family, and dispose of my children as I like?

Friend. Your wife, no doubt, is glad to get rid of her at any rate.

Ail. Oh! ay, now it comes—and the poor wife is to be dragg'd in; 'tis she does all the mischief, to be sure, and all the world will have it so.

Friend. No, no, brother, we'll leave her out of the question; she's a good woman, that has the best intentions in the world for your family, is free from all manner of self-interest, has a marvellous tenderness for you, and shews an inconceivable affection to your children, that's certain.—We'll say no more, therefore, of her, but return to your daughter; but, pray, let me ask you with what view wou'd you marry her to this Doctor Last?

Ail. With a view of having so skilful a physician as Doctor Last related to me.

Friend. Heav'ns! Brother, how can you talk so?—Skilful!—I never saw the man; but I'm told, that, of all the quacks in town, numerous as they are, he is the most ignorant, as well as the most impudent; but, it is really shocking to humanity, to consider to what a head these dangerous cheats are arrived in this great city; and, it is not less amazing, that people shou'd confide their health, their most valuable possession,

sion, to wretches they wou'd not trust with any thing else: in short, I know no way of putting a stop to their progress, but by an unlimited act against the vending of poisons, which, I think, would very fairly comprehend them.

Ail. Ha!—You have made a very fine speech now.—Do you think, if the cures they perform were not wonderful, people wou'd take their medicines so kindly?—What has essence of water-dock done for the scurvy?—What balsam of honey, in colds and consumptions?—The stomach pills for cholicky complaints?—Then, you senseless ideot you, d'ye think his majesty wou'd give his royal letters patent for pills, essences, electuaries, cordials, tinctures, quintessences, to poison his subjects?—But, to strike you dumb at once, is not that blessed medicine baume de vie, in itself, a remedy for all disorders under heaven?

Friend. All.

Ail. Look at the list of cures—then the reasoning's good—All disorders spring from the stomach—Baume de vie is a sovereign remedy for the stomach—and therefore cures all disorders.

Friend. If so, why don't you take it, and get rid of yours?

Ail. Why! why!—There's no general rule without an exception.

Friend. Come, come, brother, the truth of it is, there's nothing the matter with you at all; and I desire no better proof of the excellency of your constitution than, that all the stops you have been taking these ten years have not burst, or otherwise destroy'd you.

Ail.

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Ail. Here's Dr. Last: he is so good as to come on purpose, to administer his medicine to me himself. Pray now, brother, behave yourself properly.

S C E N E IV.

AILWOU'D, FRIENDLY, and Dr. LAST, with a Vial in one Hand, and a Glass of Water in the other.

D. Last. Come, Mr. Ailwou'd—

Ail. Brother, with your leave.

Friend. What are you going to do now?

Ail. To take some of Dr. Last's cordial; and, let me prevail upon you to take a glass too.

D. Last. Do, Sir, one dose; it's as natural to a man's constitution as breast-milk; and, if you will take it for a continency, once you are a little manured to it, it will work the most surprisingest difference—

Friend. Pray, Sir, what is it?

D. Last. Sir, I wou'd not tell you if you were my father; no, nor king George; but I'll shew you—You see this glass of New River water—it's as transparent as rock crystial—Now, I puts twelve drops of my cordial into it—and there—it's as fine asses milk as ever was tasted—I vow to the Lord, there's worse sold for a shilling a pint that comes from the beaſtis themselves.

Ail. Well; I believe that's very true.

D. Last. I presume, by your wig, Sir, that you belong to the law; and, if you'll put yourself under my care, I'll give you something, for which you'll be oblig'd to me; and yet, its nothing

thing but the juice of a simple yerb; but I've tried it upon several gentlemen in your way, who, from being sheep, as it were, have become as bold as lions.

Ail. Attend to this, brother, for its worth listening to.

D. Last. Then its one of the beautifullest things upon yearth for the memory—There was a little boy, seven years of age, did not know one of his letters—His papa was angry, his mamma was uneasy—They bought him the pretty books for children, letters in sweetmeats, gingerbread, ivory, all manner of play-things to make him take his larning, but it wou'd not do: hearing of my secret, they applied to me; I gave the child a dose, and, will you believe it, upon the word of an honest man—he cou'd say his criss-cross-row in a fortnight.

Ail. Now, that's very amazing! I'll make use of it myself, and begin to read immediately; for I never remember a word after the book is shut; and that's vexatious, you know.

D. Last. And would you believe that this fine remedy was invented by my old mother?

Ail. Your mother!

D. Last. Why, she knows as much of physick as I do; its a gift in our family; and she has invented things to take spots out of cloaths, and iron moulds out of linen.

Ail. I long to be acquainted with her.

D. Last. Well, will you swallow this now?

Ail. Ay, come give it to me.

Friend. You jest, sure—Can't you be a moment without some nasty slop or another: put it off to a more convenient time, and give nature a little respite.

Ail. Well, then, this evening, Doctor Last, or to-morrow morning.

D. Last. Pray, Sir, may I be so bold as to ax if your name aint Groggins?

Friend. No, Sir, my name's Friendly.

D. Last. Then, Sir, I desire to know, Sir, what business you have to hinder me in my occupation?—I say, the gentleman shall take it now, and I warrant it will do him good.

Friend. Pr'ythee, man, what d'ye mean?

D. Last. I means what I says.—Mr. Ailwou'd, will you take it?—If you do'nt take it, I'll go away directly.

Friend. Well, do go away, Sir, we desire it.

D. Last. O! with all my heart.

S C E N E V.

AILWOU'D, FRIENDLY.

Ail. Brother, you'll be the cause of some mischief here.

Friend. What mischief?—No, no, brother, I shall be the cause of no mischief, but a great deal of good; and, I wish I cou'd drive away all the physic-mongers that come after you with their cursed drugs in the same manner, you'd live the longer for it.

Ail. Some dreadful mischief will come of it, indeed—I must call him back—Doctor Last, Doctor Last.

Friend. Brother, for shame.

Ail. Don't talk to me, you want to fend me to my grave—Doctor Last, pray come back.

SCENE

S C E N E VI.

AILWOU'D, FRIENDLY, Dr. LAST.

Last. [*Fiercely to Friendly.*] Did you call me, Sir?

Friend. No, doctor, but Mr. Ailwou'd did.

D. Last. Mr. Ailwou'd, I'm not us'd politely here at all.

Ail. Indeed, Sir, it was not—

D. Last. I have given that there thing to ladies; nay, to children that have been troubled with the worms, who never made a wry face, but lick'd their lips after it, as pleasantly, as if it had been so much treacle, or sugar-candy.

Ail. It was not I—

D. Last. And when I took the trouble of coming myself—

Ail. 'Twas he—

D. Last. In my own chariot—

Ail. He was the cause—

D. Last. Without demanding nothing extraordinary for my trouble—I have a good mind not to marry your daughter—

Ail. I tell you it was all my brother, it was, upon my word and credit—But, give me the cordial; and, to make you amends, I'll take double the quantity.

Friend. Are you mad?

D. Last. No, he's not—I insist upon his taking it for the honour of my medicine—And if you don't take a glass too, you shall hear further from me.

Friend. Very well, doctor, I fear your sword less than your poison.

60 DOCTOR LAST

D. Last. O, ay, poison, poison, we shall see whether it's poison.

Ail. Give it to me, doctor.

D. Last. Here, Mr. Ailwou'd.

Ail. Pray now, brother, let me prevail upon you, in compliment to the doctor—

Friend. Nay, good brother, don't be absurd.

D. Last. Now, I'm satisfied; and, I'll call upon you again in an hour.

S C E N E VII.

AILWOU'D, FRIENDLY, PRUDENCE.

Ail. Prudence.

Pru. Sir?

Ail. Get me my arm'd chair here—It's inconceivable what a warmth this med'cine diffuses all over my body.

Friend. Well, but brother, did not you hear Doctor Last say just now that he was in doubt whether he wou'd marry your daughter or not; and, after so slighting an expression, surely, you will not persist in your design; but, let me talk to you of this gentleman who wishes to have my niece.

Ail. No, brother, if Doctor Last won't have her, I'll send her to France and put her into a convent; I'm sure she has an amorous inclination for somebody; and, to let you know, I have discover'd secret interviews in my house, which some people don't think I've discover'd.

Friend. I dare swear, brother, my niece has no attachment but to the gentleman I have mentioned to you; in which case, you have nothing to be angry with, all tending to the honourable purpose of marriage.

Ail.

Ail. I don't care for what you say, I'll send her over to France, I'm determined on it.

Friend. There's somebody you want to please, brother, by that, I doubt.

Ail. I know your meaning, Sir; you're always harping upon the same strain.—My wife is a strange hobgoblin in your eyes, brother.

Friend. Yes, brother, since 'tis necessary to be plain with you, 'tis your wife that I mean; and I can no more bear your ridiculous fondness for her, than that you have for physic; nor endure to see you run hand over-head into all the snares she lays for you.

Pru. O dear Sir, don't speak so of my lady; she's a woman that nobody can say any thing against; a woman without the least grain of artifice or design, and loves my master—There's no saying how much she loves him.

Ail. Ay, only ask her how excessive fond she is of me.

Pru. Most excessive!

Ail. How much concern my illness gives her.

Pru. Yes.

Ail. And the care and pains she takes about me.

Pru. —Right.—Shall we convince you now, Mr. Friendly, and shew you directly what a surprising affection my lady has for my master?—Permit me, Sir, to undeceive him, and let him see his mistake.

Ail. As how, Prudence?

Pru. Hark! my lady is just return'd—Do you step into the next room there—stretch yourself out, and feign yourself dead: he may slip into the closet: I'll set the doors open, and you'll see what violent grief she'll be in when I tell her the news.

Ail.

Ail. Hey—hum!—I profess, I have a mind to take her advice—but, no; I can never bear to hear the shrieks and lamentations she'll make over me; and yet, 'twill be a comfort to me to hear them too, to feel her virtuous tears bedew my face, and her sweet lips kissing my cheeks a thousand times, to bring me back again to life: and her—ah, verily, I'll do it; verily, I'll do it; and then, Sir, what will become of your fine surmises?—But, Prudence, art thou not afraid that her very thinking me dead will break her heart?

Pru. To be sure, Sir, if you shou'd keep her in her fright too long.

Ail. O, let me alone for that; I'll make the experiment this very minute; this very minute.—But is there no danger in feigning one's self dead?

Pru. No, no; what danger shou'd there be? 'Tis only shutting your eyes, and stretching yourself out. [*To Friendly.*] Now, Sir, we shall shew you your error, and convince you how much you have injur'd the best of wives. [*To Ailwou'd.*] 'Twill be pleasant enough afterwards, to see how blank he will look—Here's my lady; quick, quick, both of you away.

S C E N E VIII.

PRUDENCE, *Mrs.* AILWOU'D.

Pru. Oh! Heav'ns! Oh! fatal misfortune! what a strange accident is this!

Mrs. Ail. What's the matter, Prudence!

Pru. [*Crying.*] Ah! madam.

Mrs. Ail. What is it? what do you mean by blubbering, pr'ythee?

Pru. My master's dead, madam.

Mrs.

Mrs. Ail. Dead!

Pru. [*Sobbing.*] Ye-ye-yes.

Mrs. Ail. Are you sure of it?

Pru. Too sure, alas! No body yet knows any thing of this accident: There was not a soul but myself to help him; he sunk down in my arms, and went off like a child—See there, madam, he lies stretch'd out in the next room.

Mrs. Ail. Now, Heav'n be prais'd.—What a simpleton art thou to cry?

Pru. Cry, ma'am; why, I thought we were to cry?

Mrs. Ail. And for what, pray?—I know of no loss he is—Was he of any use upon earth?—A man troublesome to all the world; odious in his person; disgusting in his manners; never without some filthy medicine in his mouth, or his stomach; continually coughing, hawking, and spitting; a tiresome, peevish, disagreeable monster.

Pru. An excellent funeral sermon, truly. [*Aside.*]

Mrs. Ail. Prudence, you must assist me in the execution of my design; and you may depend upon it, I will amply reward your services: since by good fortune, no one is yet appriz'd of this accident besides ourselves, let us keep his death a secret a few days, till I have been able to settle my affairs on a sure foundation: there are papers and money, of which I wou'd possess myself—Nor, indeed, is it just, that all I have suffered with him living, shou'd not be rewarded by some advantage at his death.

Pru. To be sure, madam.

Mrs. Ail. In the mean time, I'll go and secure his keys, for I know he has a considerable sum of money in his scrutore, which he receiv'd yesterday.

SCENE

SCENE IX.

AILWOU'D, FRIENDLY, PRUDENCE, and Mrs. AILWOU'D, who, going to the Door, meets her husband, and screams.

Mrs. Ail. Ah! ah! ah!—[*Screaming.*]

Ail. O! devil of a help-mate, have I found you out?

Friend. Your servant, madam.

Mrs. Ail. Lord! my dear, I'm so disappointed—so pleas'd, I mean, and so frighten'd—This wicked girl told me you were dead.

Ail. Yes, and a fine oration you pronounc'd over me.

Mrs. Ail. Nay, but my dear, this is the most unreasonable thing; [*Turning to Friendly.*] some slight conversation that I have had with my maid here, which Mr. Ailwou'd takes in a wrong sense; but, I dare swear, when he has consider'd the matter a little, he will think differently.

Ail. Get out of my sight, get out of my sight.

Mrs. Ail. Well, but lovely, let me explain the matter to you.

Ail. I'll never hear a word from you again as long as I live.

Mrs. Ail. Nay, Sir, if you bear yourself so haughtily, you'll find me a match for you. It is not to-day, my dear I am to learn, that your brain is full of maggots; however, you shall call me more than once, before I come back to you, I assure you.

SCENE

S C E N E X.

AILWOU'D, FRIENDLY, PRUDENCE; *and then*
NANCY *and* HARGRAVE.

Ail. Did you ever hear such an impudent creature?—Od's my life, with what an air she carried it!—But do'st think she was in earnest, Prudence?

Pru. Troth do I, Sir.

Friend. Come, brother, to tell you the plain truth, Prudence devis'd this method, in order to open your eyes to your wife's perfidy—She has long deceiv'd you with a shew of false tenderness; but now, you see her in her genuine colours.

Ail. I profess my eyes are dazzled, and all my senses confus'd; I know not what I either hear or see; but, in the first place, I renounce physic—

Pru. Lord! Sir, here's Miss Nancy and Mr. Hargrave!

Nan. Dear papa, what's the matter?

Ail. The matter, child! I don't know, child. (*Seeing Hargrave.*) What brings you here, Sir?

Friend. This, brother, is the younggentleman I suppose as a match for your daughter; and after what I have said, and what has happen'd, I hope you will no longer refuse to listen to his pretensions.

Ail. Why, really, Sir, my chief objection to you, is your total ignorance of the medicinal art; if you can think of any method to remove that—

K

Har.

Har. I must own, Sir, I'm afraid I am rather too far advanc'd in life to make any progress in so deep and abstracted a study.

Ail. Why, with regard to the more capital branches, I grant you; but in the subaltern offices, I'm of a contrary opinion; suppose now you were to bind yourself apprentice for a year or two to some skilful apothecary; surely, in that time you might learn to decypher a prescription, and make up a medicine with very few blunders.

Har. D'ye think so, Sir?

Ail. You might, indeed, now and then give a dose of arsenick for salts; but that's an accident might happen to the oldest practitioner.

Friend. Ah, brother, brother, what's this I hear! It was but this moment you were determin'd to renounce physic, and here you are talking as warmly and absurdly about it as ever.

Ail. Eh!—It's very true, indeed, brother.—However, let it suffice, I give the young man my daughter without any conditions at all; and now, I'll go and get effectually rid of that other plague my wife; for I shall not be easy while we are under the same roof.

S C E N E XI.

FRIENDLY, HARGRAVE, PRUDENCE, NANCY.

Friend. If we can't cure him of his love for drugs, we have done nothing.

Nan. I doubt, Sir, that will be impossible.

Friend. Hift, here comes Doctor Last—I'll take the opportunity of your father's absence to
have

IN HIS CHARIOT. 67

have some sport with him; put on melancholy countenances, and take your cues from me.

Pru. I know what you'd be at, Sir, and I'll second you.

S C E N E XII.

FRIENDLY, HARGRAVE, PRUDENCE, NANCY,
Dr. LAST, and afterwards AILWOU'D.

D. Last. Mr. Ailwou'd, where are you? I have brought you some of my essence of cucumber, by way of a taste.

Friend. O, Doctor Last, you're come; you're servant Sir, I'm glad to see you.

D. Last. Sir, I'm oblig'd to you—Where is Mr. Ailwou'd?

Friend. Where is he, Sir?—

D. Last. Ay; because I wants to speak to him.

Friend. He's dead, Sir.

Pru. [*Bursting ridiculously into tears.*] Oh! oh! oh!

D. Last. What's the matter, Mrs. Prudence? I warrant your master is only in a sound, and I've a bottle of stuff in my pocket that will fetch him in a whiff.

Friend. Hold, Sir, no more of your stuff.

D. Last. Well then, let me go and feel his pulse.

Friend. Nor that neither: you shan't go near him; but we insist upon your telling us what you gave him out of your vial just now?

D. Last. How! tell you my secret—A bookseller offer'd me a thousand pounds for it.

Har. A bookseller offer'd you a thousand pounds! That may be, Sir, but Mr. Ailwou'd

died a few minutes after you administer'd it; we, therefore, take it for granted, that it has poison'd him; and, unless you prove very clearly to the contrary, we shall consider you as his murderer, and treat you accordingly.

D. Last. O, don't think to humbug me so.

Ail. [*Enters behind.*] What are they doing here?

Nan. Dear Sir, have patience—Stop where you are a little, and let them go on.

Friend. Within there; seize this fellow.

D. Last. Liberty—I'm a free-born Briton, in my native city—If any one lays a finger upon me, I'll put him into the Crown-office.

Friend. Ay, but we'll put you into Newgate first—Carry him before a justice, I'll go and be witness.

Pru. Ay, and so will I.

D. Last. (*In a great passion.*) Well, but stay; let me go a-bit—What will you be witness of?

Pru. That you poison'd my master.

D. Last. It can't be.

Friend. We'll prove it.

D. Last. It's a fictitious report; for to let you see the difference now—what I gave him was nothing in the world but a little chalk and vinegar; and if it cou'd do him no good, it cou'd do him no harm.

Ail. And so, firrah, this is the way you take people in; your famous cordial then is, chalk and vinegar?

D. Last. What! Mr. Ailwou'd, aren't you dead?

Ail. No, firrah; but no thanks to you for that; so get you out of my house, or I'll chalk and

IN HIS CHARIOT. 69

and vinegar you with a vengeance, you pretending, quacking, cheating—

D. Last. Don't strike me.

Ail. I'll break every bone in your skin if you don't get out of my house.

Friend. Nay, brother—

D. Last. My own chariot's below.

Ail. A cart, a wheelbarrow, for such scoundrels.

D. Last. Don't call me out of my name.

Ail. I can't, firrah.

D. Last. You did, you did, and I'll make you pay for it.

Ail. Get out of my house.

D. Last. That's all I want—He has push'd me—I call you every one to witness—I'll swear to the assault—

Friend. Take him away.

D. Last. (*As they are taking him away.*) I'll swear to the assault—and, if I don't get redemption—

SCENE LAST.

AILWOU'D, FRIENDLY, HARGRAVE, NANCY,
PRUDENCE, POLLY.

Polly. Papa! papa!

Ail. What's the matter, my dear?

Polly. My mamma's gone abroad, and says she'll never come home no more; so she won't.

Ail. A good riddance; a good riddance.

Polly. Lau, papa! if that isn't the man I saw just now kissing my sister.

Pru. Ah! you little tell-tale.

Polly.

70 DOCTOR LAST

Polly. Indeed, Prudence, but I'm no tell-tale so I an't! for he kiss'd me too, and I never said a word of it.

Friend. Well, my dear, he's to be marry'd to your sister now.

Polly. Is he?—And won't you get somebody to marry me, papa? You've been promising me a husband a great while and I'm tired of old John the butler.

Ail. Ay, my dear, I dare swear you'll lose no time—But, come, brother, let us now go in. —I have got rid of my wife; I have forsworn quacks and physic—and, I hope, I shall have the satisfaction to see our friends contented.

T H E E N D.

E P I L O G U E.

Spoken by a LITTLE GIRL of Five Years old.

LADIES and gentlemen, they've sent me out—
But I'm afraid to tell you what about;
Because 'twere bold in me, perhaps you'll say,
To come to ask you how you like the play:
Yet that's my business; nay, more free to make,
I'm come to beg you'd like it for my sake.

The author took me in his arms just now,
My dear, says he—he kiss'd me too I vow—
If you'll go out and make the audience clap,
I'll give you ribbons and a fine new cap:
Besides, he promis'd me, next time he comes
Behind the scenes, to bring me sugar-plumbs.
But whatsoe'er you think the play to be,
When you go home I'm sure you'll talk of me.

Says Lady Stingo to Sir Gilbert mild,
“At FOOT's, Sir Gilbert, have you seen the child?”
“'Tis really a *curiosity* to view her:
“Our little Betsy is a mountain to her!
“Such action, such a tongue—and yet I query
“If she be five years old—a very fairy!”
Sir Gilbert answers, with a peevish nod,
“P'shaw! let the little hussy have a rod.
“There are old folks enough to play the fool:
“Children, my lady, shou'd be sent to school.”
And so they shou'd, the naughty ones, no doubt,
Who'll neither books nor needle learn without:
But I am come of no such idle breed;
At four years old, I cou'd both write and read;
To be at work my fingers still are itching—
These flowers here are all of my own stitching.

[*Taking up and shewing her frock.*]

EPILOGUE.

But, is my prate dislik'd, for after all,
I am but young, 'tis true, and somewhat small;
And taller ladies, I must needs confess,
Might speak an epilogue with more address.
However, some few things I have to plead:
First, 'pon my word and credit, I'm a maid.
Will that pass here for merit?—I don't know—
I'm a new face—which generally does so.
And if you want me louder, taller, bolder,
Have patience—I shall mend, as I grow older,



T H E
BANKRUPT.

A
C O M E D Y,

I N
T H R E E A C T S.

By SAMUEL FOOTE, Esq.

L O N D O N :

Printed for G. KEARSLEY, No. 46, near Serjeants-inn,
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THIS COMEDY

IS DEDICATED

BY HIS LORDSHIP'S MOST

DEVOTED AND OBLIGED

HUMBLE SERVANT,

SAMUEL FOOTE.

P R O L O G U E.

Spoken by Mr. FOOTE.

FOR wit's keen satire, and this laughing stage,
What theme so fruitful as a Bankrupt Age?
For not confin'd to commerce is the curse,
The head is near as empty as the purse;
Equally sunk, our credit and our wit,
Nor is the sage more solvent than the cit;
All these—but soft, ere thus abroad we roam,
Were it not prudent first to look at home?
You, gentle Sirs, have giv'n me credit long,
And took my word for many an idle song;
But if exhausted, I give notes to-day,—
For wit and humour, which I cannot pay,
I must turn Bankrupt too, and hop away.
Unless indeed, I modestly apply,
For leave to sell my works by lottery.
Tho' few will favour, where's no cash to see'em,
Poor hopes, that way to part with my Museum:
My old friend, Smirk, indeed, may lend his aid,
And sell by auction all my stock in trade;
His placid features, and imploring eye,
May tempt perhaps the tardy town to buy;
His winning manner, and his soft address,
To other sales of mine have giv'n success;
But after all, my ever honour'd friends,
On you alone my fate this night depends;
I've fought some battles, gain'd some vict'ries here,
And little thought a culprit to appear
Before this house; but if resolv'd you go
To find me guilty, or to make me so,
To grant me neither wit, nor taste, nor sense,
Vain were my plea, and useless my defence.
But still, I will not steal, I will not beg,
Tho' I've a passport in this wooden leg.
But to my cot contentedly retire,
And stew my cabbage by my only fire;
Mean time, great Sirs, my sentence yet unknown,
E'en as your Justice be your candour shown,
And when you touch my honour, don't forget your own.

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

Sir Robert Riscouter,		Mr. <i>Foste.</i>
Sir James Biddulph,		Mr. <i>Aickin.</i>
Pillage,	— —	Mr. <i>Palmer.</i>
Resource,	— —	Mr. <i>Fearon.</i>
Margin,	— —	Mr. <i>Baddeley.</i>
Robin,	— —	Mr. <i>Whitefield.</i>
Phelim O'Flam,	—	Mr. <i>Bannister.</i>
James,	— —	Mr. <i>R. Palmer.</i>
Sir Thomas Tradewell,		Mr. <i>Davis.</i>
Dingey,	— —	Mr. <i>Griffiths.</i>
Pepper,	— —	Mr. <i>Stephens.</i>
Plaster,	— —	Mr. <i>Jones.</i>
Rumour,	— —	Mr. <i>Lloyd.</i>
Clerk,	— —	Mr. <i>Walters.</i>

W O M E N.

Lady Riscouter,		Miss <i>Sherry.</i>
Lydia,	— —	Mrs. <i>Jewel.</i>
Lucy,	— —	Miss <i>Ambrose.</i>
Kitty,	— —	Miss <i>Platt.</i>

T H B

BANKRUPT.

A C T I.

Enter ROBIN *and* KITTY, *meeting.*

ROBIN.

THIS letter and casket, with my master's most respectful compliments, you will, Kitty, with your own fair hands, deliver to Miss.

KITTY.

The Casket is heavy—I suppose, Mr. Robin, this is what my Lady calls the Purryfunalia?

ROBIN.

A small tribute, Madam, to adorn the bride on the happy occasion.

B KITTY.

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KITTY.

What then, I suppose you look upon this marriage as good as concluded.

ROBIN.

Things are gone such a length, that not the least doubt can be made.

KITTY.

And yet between the cup and the lip,—you remember the proverb?

ROBIN.

One of the parties may die to be sure,—otherwise I don't know how—

KITTY.

No?

ROBIN.

No: The young lady has not alter'd her mind?

KITTY.

Not to my knowledge.

ROBIN.

What, Sir Robert Riscouter, her father? these curmudgeonly cits regard no ties, no obligations when they have an higher interest in view. I suppose he has received larger proposals from some other party.

KITTY.

I have heard no such thing.

ROBIN.

Well then, I am sure no impediment can arise from our quarter. My master, Sir James Bid-
dulph,

THE BANKRUPT. 3

dulph, is too much a man of honour: besides, I know his whole soul is wrapt up in Miss Lydia.

KITTY.

He has given her pretty convincing proofs of his passion.

ROBIN.

What, I suppose the malicious mother-in-law, who, I know, hates Miss, and has a damn'd deal of art, in conjunction with Miss Lucy, that precious pledge of her former husband's affections, has contrived to throw some confounded rub in the way.

KITTY.

Bless me, Mr. Robin, I don't know what you mean, I am sure I said nothing at all.

ROBIN.

No?

KITTY.

No. But only that things which are not done, may perhaps never be done; there is nothing certain but death.

ROBIN.

Very moral, Miss Kitty,—(there is some mystery, if I could but get at it, but this slut is as cunning—I will have a trial, however) nay, for the matter of that, I can have, Mrs. Kitty, no interest at all in this match: there is so much confinement, and form, even in the most fashionable families, that a single service is best suited to me, especially too, that now I am got into most of the clubs: there is one circumstance I

B 2

shall

4 THE BANKRUPT.

shall most feelingly regret: That I own, will greatly touch me.

K I T T Y.

And pray, what may that be, Mr. Robin?

R O B I N.

Not living under the same roof with Miss Kitty. I made no doubt, Madam, but your fortunes would follow your mistress's, and, in that case, I thought to soften the rigours of my captivity, in your agreeable converse.

K I T T Y.

Really, Mr. Robin? Well, I protest, I did not.

R O B I N.

And when our mutual endeavours had procured for us a small independence, I flatter'd myself with gently sliding the down-hill of life, subject to no other will but Miss Kitty's.

K I T T Y.

What a difference between him, and the servants of this side the bar?—Really, Mr. Robin, you talk nearly as well as your master.

R O B I N.

And no wonder, Madam, since love, the same deity, inspires us both.

K I T T Y.

How quick you are in your rippartees, Mr. Robin? are you good at a riddle?

R O B I N.

If you mean the making them, no; it is too low a species of writing for me; for novels I have

THE BANKRUPT. 5

have now and then some dealings with Noble, and have by me a genteel comedy of one act, that is thought to have a good deal of merit.

K I T T Y.

And Pray when does it make its appearance?

R O B I N.

Why, faith, I don't know, all the managers are such scribblers, that they won't give a genius fair play, but engross the whole stage to themselves.

K I T T Y.

Very selfish, indeed. Well, Mr. Robin, though you won't make a riddle, I will, which, as my Lady expects me, you may study to expound by yourself. This match won't take place, and yet are none of the parties to blame; I may live in the same house with you, though I should leave my young Mistress's service, and the loss of my place may perhaps be the making of my fortune. So Adieu.

R O B I N.

Nay, but Miss Kitty, one word, if you please.

K I T T Y.

Not a syllable, go, and puzzle your brains. But take this, for your comfort, that if you cannot at present make out my meaning, a little time will fully explain it. [Exit.

R O B I N.

So skittish and shy, Mrs. Pert! but if our next meeting don't bring forth this secret, you are no true chambermaid, nor I fit for a valet de chambre. All reserve amongst servants is flat treason

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treason against the community. Every well-disciplin'd domestic is bound in honour, however careful of his own, to reveal all family secrets, to the rest of the tribe. But I must brush off, for here comes my Lady. *[Exit.*

Enter Lady RISCOUNTER, and JAMES.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

And he has promised that the paragraph shall appear in the paper this morning?

JAMES.

I am afraid, Madam, there is no doubt of his keeping his word.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Afraid! what a pusillanimous creature art thou?

JAMES.

As your Ladyship, by what means I know not, is acquainted with my veneration for Miss, you can't wonder at my feeling some compunction, in becoming an instrument to ruin her fame.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Why the fellow is a fool: don't you consider, that her ruin, as you call it, will be your rise?

JAMES.

Perhaps so, Madam, but how can I—

Lady RISCOUNTER.

You love Lydia, you say?

JAMES.

More than I have words to express.

Lady

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Lady RISCOUNTER.

And Sir James Biddulph you detest, as a successful rival, no doubt?

JAMES.

Except on that account, I have no reason.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

And what better reason can any man have? don't you know, that the two great master passions that give birth to all that we do, is hatred and love?

JAMES.

Without doubt.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

The mind would stagnate without them; and are not you particularly fortunate, in being able, by one masterly stroke, to gratify both?

JAMES.

Were I indeed sure of succeeding with Miss?

Lady RISCOUNTER.

You have every probable chance in your favour: in the first place, it is impossible, consistently with his honour, that Sir James Biddulph can pursue his designs upon Lydia.

JAMES.

May be not.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Nor will any proper suitable person think of her when her reputation is gone.

JAMES.

Too true, I believe.

LADY

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Lady RISCOUNTER.

Then, who so likely to succeed as yourself? as you are the party suspected, common policy will point out you for her husband.

JAMES.

But will Miss Lydia be brought to submit?

Lady RISCOUNTER.

She can have no choice but her father's. Him, I can easily manage, and possibly, as a *douceur*, prevail on him to augment the very considerable fortune she derives from her aunt; never fear, things are in a very good way.

JAMES.

I must submit all to your ladyship's management.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Your part will be easy enough, you will have nothing to do but be passive.

Enter KITTY, and LUCY, with a newspaper in her hand

LUCY.

Here, Madam, here it is, and placed in a most conspicuous part of the paper.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

And no alteration?

LUCY.

Not a word. In the exact form that we sent it.

Lady

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Lady RISCOUNTER.

Pr'ythee read it, my dear.

LUCY.

[*Reads.*] "We can assure the publick, from
"the very best authority, that the beautiful
"daughter, by a former venture, of an emi-
"nent banker, not far from the Monument,
"was surpris'd by the servants, in a most criti-
"cal situation, with Mr. J——s, clerk to her
"father."

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Right, right.

LUCY.

"And what heightens her crime, she was on
"the eve of being married to an amiable young
"baronet, at the west end of the town, the ap-
"parent object of her own choice."

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Finely circumstantial, it is impossible for any
body to err in the person.

LUCY.

Not in nature; now, I think, we shall pull
down Miss Prudery's pride.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

It cannot fail. Kitty, you have carefully pe-
rused the instructions I gave you.

KITTY.

Please your ladyship, I have them by heart.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Don't be too forward in replying to any ques-
tion they put to you; but answer with a kind of
C reluctant

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reluctant hesitation, as if the facts were forc'd from your mouth.

KITTY.

Never fear, Madam.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Don't forget to make frequent professions of the great love and affection you bear your young mistress, that you could not have thought it, shan't know whom to trust for the future; ready to lay down your life for your lady.

LUCY.

Suggest too, that some strange arts must have been used, or you are convinc'd she could never have been brought to submit.

KITTY.

I shall carefully, Madam, obey your directions.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

And squeeze out a tear now and then, if you can.

LUCY.

Or, if they won't come, rub your eyes till they are red.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Right; this will give probability to all that you say.

LUCY.

Otherwise, the young hypocrite's behaviour, has been always so specious, those who know her won't credit the story.

KITTY.

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KITTY.

Suppose, Madam, Sir James Biddulph, or any body else, should make any enquiry.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Answer none of their questions; your tenderness for Lydia will be a proper excuse; to your master's authority, indeed, you are obliged to submit. You comprehend me?

KITTY.

Perfectly, Madam.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Within, I will give you further instructions; and remember, Kitty, your fortune is at stake: Success, in this one instance, will make you easy for life.

KITTY.

The best I can do will be but a poor return for your ladyship's goodness.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Send the news-paper in to your master. [*Exit Kitty.*] You have, James, seen none of our people this morning.

JAMES.

I have not enter'd the shop.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Then get out of the way as fast as you can; secrete yourself somewhere, that will give additional strength to the story. Your withdrawing will argue a consciousness arising from guilt.

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JAMES.

That I most sufficiently feel.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Success will soon drown the remembrance.

[Exit James.] That fellow must not appear; his mind is so maukish, that, should he be confronted with Lydia, he would betray our whole plot in an instant.

LUCY.

It is a wonder, Madam, how have you got all this address: instead of a private family, you are form'd to govern a country.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Why, I think, I may without vanity say, that I deriv'd from nature some talents for this kind of intrigue; but to the care of my education I chiefly owe what I am.

LUCY.

Indeed, Madam!

Lady RISCOUNTER.

My father was a stock-broker, you know, and your father, my first husband, an attorney, my dear.

LUCY.

True, Madam.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

And as they had no reserve, they kept no secrets from me, I must have been a blockhead, indeed, not to have made some progress in their professional arts.

LUCY.

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LUCY.

True, Madam.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

But after defeating Sir James Biddulph's designs upon Lydia, to turn the tide of his affections, and substitute you in her room, will, Lucy, be the great political effort.

LUCY.

From your ladyship's great abilities there cannot be the least doubt of success: besides, her father is so hasty and violent that, I am sure, he will never be brought to forgive her.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

There is no relying on that; no mortal was ever so mutable. Our various climate is not so inconstant as he. Sir Robert is choleric enough, but then, as he is provoked without cause, he is appeased without reason; one word will inflame, another extinguish the fire; whom one minute he persecutes, the next he protects. His joy, grief, love, hatred, are in eternal rotation, and I have been often tempted to think his mind a machine, moved only by the immediate objects before it.

LUCY.

And yet, Madam, how compleatly you rule him!

Lady RISCOUNTER.

No longer, child, than I stay by his side; after that, the first person has him that sees him, and all my impressions are effac'd in an instant.

Enter

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Enter KITTY.

KITTY.

My master has got at the paragraph.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Has he so? well, and—

KITTY.

He enquired, Madam, for you, and putting his finger here, bid me shew this directly to your ladyship.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

He did not suspect then that I had seen it before?

KITTY.

Not in the least—but here he comes, tottering and trembling—with his face as white as a sheet.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Get you behind.

Enter Sir ROBERT RISCOUNTER.

Sir ROBERT.

Well, my dear, have you read—

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Sir Robert, I have.

Sir ROBERT.

Have you so? Well, and pray what do you think? Did you ever see such an audacious, abominable, impudent, scandalous piece of scurrility? Zounds, give me my cane, I will go directly to the rascally printer's, and—

Lady

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Lady RISCOUNTER.

But suppose, Sir Robert, the printer should not be passive, and, in return for the strokes of your cane, should leave the marks of his nails in your face.

Sir ROBERT.

There may be something in that, as your ladyship says. I have heard some of the rogues are strong and sturdy enough.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

And, first, let us be sure who the party is the paragraph points at.

Sir ROBERT.

Hey! what d'ye say? points at? why, it is as clear as the sun—[*takes the paper*]*—banker—Monument—first venture—zounds, they might as well have published my name, and my daughter's, at length.*

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Why, to say truth, the marks are pretty strong; but still let us coolly consider the case. Kitty, go down; Lucy, my dear, leave Sir Robert and me together a little.

[*Exit Lucy and Kitty.*]

Sir ROBERT.

Ay, go, child, pr'ythee go. I don't believe, Lady Riscounter, that there is a single man in the Ward, who would have the least hesitation in pronouncing who was—

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Well, but don't let us be in such hurry to make the application ourselves; the malice of others will

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will be ready enough to do that: let me see, is there no other banker lives near the Monument?

Sir ROBERT.

Not that I know; but suppose there should, here, the west end of the town, and the amiable baronet, puts the matter out of dispute: hey, what d'ye say?—

Lady RISCOUNTER.

That, indeed; but, hold a little, does not it mention the name of the paramour? Ay, here it is, J—S.

Sir ROBERT.

J—s.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

J—s, I don't recollect any body that visits here, whose name those letters will suit.

Sir ROBERT.

There is no Jones, nor Joddrell—poo, pox, that is an L—nor Jennings, nor Jarvis, nor Jenkins, nor——

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Not that I recollect.

Sir ROBERT.

There is Jacobs the Jew, but he is as old as one of the patriarchs, with his beard down to his breeches; they can never mean him.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Poo! that is too absurd to suppose: but stay, are there no other distinguishing marks? um, um——“J—s, clerk of her father's,” I own that passage escaped me.

Sir

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Sir ROBERT.

Hey! what did you say? and me too, one of my clerks! who can that be? J—s, the two letters belonging to a surname.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

So I should imagine.

Sir ROBERT.

Zounds! he can never be James.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

James!

Sir ROBERT.

An impudent, eternal, damn'd son of a bitch! this is the consequence of taking beggars into your bosom.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

But, Sir Robert—

Sir ROBERT.

Don't mention it, Madam; was not he the thirteenth son of a starv'd curate in Essex, ragged as their colts, and knew about as much as one of their calves—did not I feed, cloath, take him into my house, treat him as if he had been—and, in return, the villain to dishonour my child!

Lady RISCOUNTER.

You are too impatient, Sir Robert; why should you fix all at once upon James? I have observed the lad's behaviour to be discreet and modest; nay, indeed, rather shy and reserv'd.

Sir ROBERT.

That is true enough, I must own. I never
D remark'd

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remark'd the boy to be presumptuous and forward, like some of our pert prigs of the city, but, as your ladyship observes, rather bashful and shy. No, no, it can never be him.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Not but I have known people with that specious outside appearance, carry minds as malignant and daring——

Sir ROBERT.

The curliest fly dogs upon earth: hypocrisy is the finest veil for a villain. I always suspected there was something bad behind his solemn sanctified look: I don't believe the scoundrel ever swore an oath since he came into the house. There is a villain for you, my dear.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Nay, but my dear, let us conclude nothing rashly. Suppose you send for James up, and sift him a little?

Sir ROBERT.

That mayn't be amiss—who's there?

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Not that I believe he will be ever brought to confess.

Sir ROBERT.

He! no, no, curse him. Him! you will never catch him at that: you might as well hope to extract sugar from salt. I may as well let him alone.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Let us see him however.

Enter

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Enter a Servant.

Sir ROBERT.

True. Let James know that I want him, but don't tell the fellow I am angry, and so get him to skulk out of the way.

SERVANT.

I did not know that your worship was angry, 'till you told me your——

Sir ROBERT.

I tell you! my dear, did I say any such thing? you prying, impertinent——Go, and do as you are bid. *[Exit Servant.]*

Lady RISCOUNTER.

I don't think it unlikely, Sir Robert, but some idle acquaintance, without considering the consequences, may have inserted this malicious article, by way of pleasantry, as a kind of jest upon James.

Sir ROBERT.

Nothing so probable, Lady Riscounter: this town swarms with such forward, frivolous puppies.

Enter Servant.

Well, where is James?

SERVANT.

Sir, he is not within.

Sir ROBERT.

What, is the rascal run off?

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Lady RISCOUNTER.

No, my dear, perhaps only gone out with some bills for acceptance.

Sir ROBERT.

Like enough. When will he be back?

SERVANT.

The rest of the clerks have not seen him to-day.

Sir ROBERT.

Not seen him to-day? what, are all of them blind then?

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Nay, Sir Robert, perhaps he has not been in the shop.

SERVANT.

So they say.

[Exit.

Sir ROBERT.

Then they could not see him, indeed. Not in the shop! nay, then the business is clear; guilt, guilt, flight is full as bad as confession.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

It does look suspicious, I own; but then nothing ill can happen without your daughter's concurrence, and you have not the least doubt of her.

Sir ROBERT.

Doubt! hey!

Lady RISCOUNTER.

And, in fact, have nothing to fear.

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Sir ROBERT.

Fear! doubt! I hope your Ladyship has no more doubts than myself.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Why should I? how does this affair concern me?

Sir ROBERT.

As it concerns me, Lady Riscounter; do you suppose I should have been indifferent, if such a charge had fallen on Lucy?

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Such a charge can never fall upon my daughter Lucy.

Sir ROBERT.

Full as soon as on my daughter Lydia.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

I am not, Sir Robert, so certain of that.

Sir ROBERT.

Lady Riscounter, you begin to alarm me; you know more of this matter, than you are willing to own.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Whatever I know, Sir Robert, I am resolved not to communicate.

Sir ROBERT.

And why not?

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Whatever a mother-in-law says, the good-natured world always imputes to malice.

Sir

Sir ROBERT.

Generally the case, I must own. But to me you may, nay, you ought to reveal.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Since you are so earnest, I own some rumours have reach'd me.

Sir ROBERT.

Of what kind?

Lady RISCOUNTER.

You will pardon me there: if you will examine your daughter's maid, Kitty; she, I am told, can satisfy all your enquiries.

Sir ROBERT.

An artful baggage, I know. For heaven's sake, my dear, send her hither directly.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

But not the least mention of me. [Exit.

Sir ROBERT.

Very well. I never observ'd the least correspondence between Lydia and James; but what of that? they would take good care, I warrant, to conceal it from me.

Enter KITTY.

So, I find you were the go-between, the little infamous agent in this curs'd——

KITTY

Sir Robert—

Sir

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Sir ROBERT.

You must have been a volunteer; I am sure, James was not able to bribe you, for he is as poor as a pillag'd black in Bengal.

KITTY.

Really, Sir, I don't understand you.

Sir ROBERT.

You mean, hussy, you won't: Come, you may as well tell me all the particulars concerning Lydia and James; with the main article, you see I am already acquainted.

KITTY.

Don't press me, pray Sir; I would rather die than say any thing to hurt my young mistress. [*cries*,

Sir ROBERT.

Nay, pr'ythee, Kitty, don't cry, you are a good girl, and love my daughter, I see.

KITTY.

And not without reason, for she has been the kindest, best——

Sir ROBERT.

Nay, till now, she was ever an amiable girl; but here, child, you will do her a capital service.

KITTY.

Indeed, Sir.

Sir ROBERT.

For if her affections are fix'd upon James, tho' I may lament, I shall not oppose him.

KITTY.

Since that is the case, I can't say, but early one morning, hearing a noise in Miss Lydia's apartment, I stepp'd down to see what was the matter.

Sir ROBERT.

Well?

KITTY.

Just as I got to the foot of the stairs, her door open'd, and out came Mr. James.

Sir ROBERT.

Did he? and why did not you alarm the house and seize the villain directly?

KITTY.

That, Sir, would have ruined my Lady's reputation at once.

Sir ROBERT.

True enough, you did wisely. Did the fellow perceive you?

KITTY.

Yes, Sir, and made me a sign to be silent.

Sir ROBERT.

I don't doubt it.

KITTY.

Indeed, he came to me two hours after, told me he had a passion for Miss, never could get an opportunity of disclosing his mind, and desperate, at finding his hopes on the point of being ruin'd, he had stolen that morning into her chamber, humbly to implore her compassion and pity.

Sir

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Sir ROBERT.

He chose a fine time and place for the purpose.

KITTY.

On his knees he desired, I would not disclose to any mortal what I had seen.

Sir ROBERT.

Which you should not have done.

KITTY.

He was too late in his caution; not five minutes before I had told it to Mrs. Hemshot, Miss Lucy's maid.

Sir ROBERT.

No wonder then the story is public.

KITTY.

I am certain sure, my young Mistress is innocent, for Mr. James vowed and declar'd he was all upon honour.

Sir ROBERT.

The malice of mankind will never be brought to believe it; you may go. [*Exit Kitty.*] So the girl's reputation is gone, and a retreat from the world the only choice that is left her: all my calamities are come upon me at once; my child ruin'd, and from the general distress, my own fame and fortune on the brink of destruction: the attorney and broker will be instantly here to contrive means for propping my tottering credit. Am I in a condition to think of expedients, or to listen to—

E

Enter

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Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT.

A card, Sir.

[*Exit.*

Sir ROBERT.

Reads.] “ Sir James Biddulph’s compliments
“ to Sir Robert Riscouter, and if convenient
“ will take the liberty to wait on him this morn-
“ ing.” Prepar’d, as I expected, our misfor-
tunes have reach’d him, and he comes to break
off the match; he is not to be blam’d. This
rash, inconsiderate—I’ll to her, and if she has the
least atom of feeling, I’ll—And yet, how could
the poor girl help his intrusion? she might be
ignorant, and yet the fellow without encourage-
ment, would never have dared to—Yet the
impudence of some men is amazing, and so in-
deed is the folly of women: the original fault
must be his. But her after-compliance makes
her equally guilty, for had she disapprov’d, she
would have reveal’d the fact to her mother or me.
That, that, condemns her at once; I will to her
directly, and find out the full extent of her guilt.

[*Exit.*

End of the FIRST ACT.

ACT

ACT II.

Miss LUCY and Miss LYDIA discovered.

LUCY.

TO us, indeed, who are encumber'd with fathers and mothers, marriage is a convenient business enough.

LYDIA.

And why on that account, my dear Lucy?

LUCY.

As it makes one the entire mistress of one's time, and one is accountable to no mortal for what one says or does.

LYDIA.

What Lucy, not to your husband?

LUCY.

Nay, don't be prudish, my dear : you are going back to the days of Queen Bess ; who talks now of obedience and duty ? ridiculous ! her majesty's old fardingale is not more out of fashion.

LYDIA.

No !

LUCY.

No : one reads in books, indeed, of nuptial ties and conjugal love ; mere obsolescences ! modern marriages are mere matters of interest.

LYDIA.

Interest !

E 2

LUCY.

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LUCY.

Ay, child; for instance now, Sir Thomas Perkins, our neighbour, finding that Miss Williams has a good parcel of land, which being contiguous to his estate, will be very proper for him to possess; immediately sends his rent-roll a-courting to her's. The parchments are produc'd on both sides, and no impediments, that is incumbrance appearing, a couple of lawyers marry the manors together.

LYDIA.

Without the last regard to the persons.

LUCY.

Poo, persons! they are consider'd, child, as mansion-houses upon the estates, which one lives in, or neglects, just as they happen to be convenient, or not.

LYDIA.

But suppose Lucy, as in mine, there should happen to be no land in the case.

LUCY.

Then, child, the bargain is alter'd: you deposit so much money, and he grants you such an annuity; a mere Smithfield bargain, that is all.

LYDIA.

A pretty picture you give me of marriage. But this is all raillery, Lucy; I am sure you would never submit to this barter and sale.

LUCY.

I should do like the rest of the world. We must take things as we find them. You are not
so

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so foolish as to be fond of Sir James Biddulph, my dear.

LYDIA.

Fond? the expression is strong; you must imagine I prefer him to the rest of—

LUCY.

Why, as to his appearance, it must be own'd, that the mansion is a pretty modern structure enough, well built, and prettily finish'd: I can't indeed say his upper story is furnished quite to my taste.

LYDIA.

Nay, Lucy, now you are unjust, the whole world concur in giving him sense.

LUCY:

Nay, that article is not very material. If I had him, that is a part of his house, with which I should hold very little communication, my dear. But however, you love him.

LYDIA.

Or I am sure I never would have him.

LUCY.

And, I suppose, if any accident was to break off this match, it would make you very unhappy.

LYDIA.

Can you doubt it, my dear?

LUCY.

There is one evil that attends these ridiculous contracts.

LYDIA.

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LYDIA.

You don't look upon love then as an essential ingredient?

LUCY.

Ha! ha! ha! silly and singular; do you know, Lydia, why Love is always painted as blind?

LYDIA.

There are many causes assigned by the poets.

LUCY.

But not one has given the true one: because the little rogue shuts our eyes to our interests.

LYDIA.

Fye, Lucy, where could you get these narrow and libertine notions?

LUCY.

A little more experience will tell you. But here comes Sir Robert, not a word of what has pass'd.

LYDIA.

I shall, my dear Lucy, for your sake, endeavour to forget all you have said.

Enter Sir ROBERT RISCOUNTER.

Sir ROBERT.

Lucy, you may go down. [*Exit Lucy.*] After what has pass'd, you will not be surpriz'd that I insist upon your immediately quitting my house!

LYDIA.

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LYDIA.

Quitting the house, Sir!

Sir ROBERT.

Your fortune is independant and large; you will no doubt be happy in escaping from the observing eye of a father.—I will be cool, and desire only an answer to a very few questions. Since the death of your mother (who is happy in having escap'd the knowledge of this infamous business) have I been ever wanting in any act of paternal affection?

LYDIA.

For Heaven's sake, Sir, what can be the meaning of——

Sir ROBERT.

Come, no evasions, but answer briefly, yes, or no, to my questions.

LYDIA.

No, Sir.

Sir ROBERT.

After my first care to educate you fit for the world, has it not been my principal study to settle you properly in it?

LYDIA:

Most assuredly, Sir.

Sir ROBERT.

And knowing to what temptations girls at your age are expos'd, did I not seek out a man of rank, honour, and fortune, to be your protector, and guardian for life?

LYDIA.

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LYDIA.

I confess it.

Sir ROBERT.

Did you ever express the least dislike to Sir James Biddulph's address?

LYDIA.

Never.

Sir ROBERT.

How could you then so far forget what you owe to me, and yourself, as privately to harbour and encourage a passion—

LYDIA.

I am confounded.

Sir ROBERT.

For an object too unsuitable in every respect :
for a mere creature of charity?

LYDIA.

Charity!

Sir ROBERT.

Ay, for it was compassion to the father's numerous family that induced me to take James into my house.

LYDIA.

James! what of him? or what relation, Sir, can he have to me?

Sir ROBERT.

This is astonishing in a girl of her years. What then, you know nothing of this fellow's affections?

LYDIA.

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LYDIA.

For me?

Sir ROBERT.

Ay, for you. No billet-doux, no private meetings, no stealing into your chamber before the servants were out of their beds.

LYDIA.

Amazing! and who, Sir, has dared to insinuate—

Sir ROBERT.

Insinuate! why the tale is the talk of the town: all the morning papers are full on't.

LYDIA:

What can, Sir, be the meaning of this? is it possible you can think, Sir, your daughter so abandoned, so lost——

Sir ROBERT.

Hey!

LYDIA.

Recollect, dear Sir, I beseech you, have I in the whole course of my life, ever once dared to deceive you?

Sir ROBERT.

Why, Child, I can't say that you have. But in this case, there is such positive proof.

F

LYDIA.

LYDIA.

Of what kind, I beseech you?

Sir ROBERT.

Facts, facts, well attested; so don't pretend to deny.

LYDIA.

Attested! by whom?

Sir ROBERT.

Their names are needless at present. But what motive or interest could any one have to invent, or propagate.

LYDIA.

None, that I can discover; but, however strong the appearance, if either in thought, word, or deed, there has any thing, either criminal or culpable, passed between me and——

Sir ROBERT.

What, no declarations? no interviews?

LYDIA.

No more than with any other man in your service.

Sir ROBERT.

Astonishing!

LYDIA.

If the contrary can be made to appear, abandon me, Sir, at once to that world, already so prepossess'd to my prejudice, the greatest misfortune that can ever befall me.

Sir

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Sir ROBERT.

Well, Child, rise ; I can't help giving credit to what you aver. But how to persuade the rest of—

Enter A SERVANT

Somebody wants me? as I expected. Sir James Biddulph I reckon.

SERVANT.

No, Sir, a couple of gentlemen, who say they came by appointment.

Sir ROBERT.

I guess who they are. Another bad business. Shew them into the parlour. [*Exit Servant.*] You don't know half your father's afflictions—go, child, go into your chamber.

LYDIA.

I hope my father believes me.

Sir ROBERT.

I do, I do. As soon as I have dispatch'd these gentlemen, I will see you again. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE.

SCENE, *A Parlour.*

Enter PILLAGE *and* RESOURCE.

PILLAGE.

Ay, take my word for it, Mr. Resource, in the whole round of the law, and, thank Heaven, the dominions are pretty extensive, there is not a nicer road to hit than the region of Bankrupts.

RESOURCE.

I should have thought it a turnpike, for you see how easily even a country Attorney can find it.

PILLAGE.

Pshaw, what amongst manufacturers, and meagre mechanicks? fellows not worth powder and shot; and yet these paltry Provincials, master Resource, are often obliged to solicit my aid.

RESOURCE.

Indeed!

PILLAGE.

Why, t'other day, a poor dog, over head and ears, in debt from the country, was recommended to me, by a client; the fellow had scrap'd together all he could get, and came up to town, with a view of running beyond sea, but I stopp'd him directly.

RESOURCE.

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RESOURCE.

Really!

PILLAGE.

O, ay, in a couple of months wash'd him as white as a sheep that is just shorn.

RESOURCE.

How did you bring it about?

PILLAGE.

Easy enough. Made him take a house in Cheapside, call'd him a citizen, in the London Gazette, and his name of John Madge, (being as common as carrots) not a soul in the country suspected that it was he.

RESOURCE.

How should they?

PILLAGE.

Pass'd a few necessary notes to get him number and value, white-wash'd him, and sent him home to his wife.

RESOURCE.

Cleanly and cleverly done.

PILLAGE.

When the country chaps brought in their bills, he drew out of his pocket a certificate, and gave them a receipt in full for all their demands,

RESOURCE.

How the loobies must look.

PILLAGE.

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PILLAGE.

Chop-fallen, no doubt: but he is in business again.

RESOURCE.

He is?

PILLAGE.

O yes, and I hear does very well. For I left him two hundred out of the six he brought with him, to begin the world with credit afresh.

RESOURCE.

Very generous indeed, Mr. Pillage.

PILLAGE.

O! a trifling affair, got little by it!—for the matter of that, a mere statute is not much in itself.

RESOURCE.

Ay! Well I thought it brought pretty perquisites with it.

PILLAGE.

No, no; it is a good hot-bed indeed to raise chancery suits in.

RESOURCE.

Ay, that is a produce that deserves propagation.

PILLAGE.

What, I see you have found a remedy for master Monk of the Minorities? I thought his was an incurable case.

RESOURCE.

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RESOURCE.

Only skinn'd o'er the fore, master Pillage, it will soon break out again.

PILLAGE.

What were the means that you used?

RESOURCE.

Got some friends of mine to advance him cash on a project.

PILLAGE.

Of what kind?

RESOURCE.

A scheme of his, to monopolize sprats and potatoes.

PILLAGE.

And it took?

RESOURCE.

Oh! there was no danger of that. The people of this country are always ready to bite at a bubble.

PILLAGE.

Will it hold?

RESOURCE.

Pshaw! We shall break before the season for sprats, and as to the Potatoes, we had laid in a ship load or two.

PILLAGE.

For which you procured a good price?

RESOURCE.

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RESOURCE.

Not a house. They are all now in our cellars in Southwark, and have shot out branches as tall as the trees in the Park.

PILLAGE.

Ha! ha! ha! but apropos, can you guess Sir Robert's business with us?

RESOURCE.

Very near, I believe.

PILLAGE.

What, the house is not a tumbling?

RESOURCE.

A pretty large crack.

PILLAGE.

Which he wants our assistance to plaister. Why, I thought the knight was as firm as a rock.

RESOURCE.

I knew better things. I saw the mansion was daily decaying. Hush, here he comes.

Enter Sir ROBERT, followed by a Clerk.

Sir ROBERT.

As we have effects in our hands, accept the bills to be sure. But how to discharge them when they are due.—So, gentlemen, I have sent for you to beg your assistance.

PILLAGE.

PILLAGE.

Sir Robert, we shall be very happy to serve you, if you will tell us but how.

Sir ROBERT.

Why, to deal plainly, gentlemen, my affairs are come to a crisis, and without some substantial and speedy assistance, my credit will quickly expire.

PILLAGE.

You surprize me : I never guess'd it in danger. Pray, Sir Robert, what brought on the disease, was it an alley fever, or a gradual decay ?

Sir ROBERT.

A complication of causes. Not but I could have weather'd them all, had the house in Holland but stood, their failure must be followed by mine.

PILLAGE.

What, Van Swieten's ?

Sir ROBERT.

Have you heard any thing of him to-day ?

PILLAGE.

No doubt, I believe, of their stopping ; their bills were offer'd at Garraway's under forty per cent. As your name is not blown upon yet, suppose you coin a couple of quires ! don't you think the circulation might serve you ?

Sir ROBERT.

No, that mint is exhausted, and private paper return'd to its primitive value. My real case

G

can

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can be no longer conceal'd. I must stop, and should be glad of your advice how to manage the matter.

PILLAGE.

There are two methods in use. The choice will depend on how your affairs stand with the world.

Sir ROBERT.

Bitter bad, Mr. Pillage.

PILLAGE.

I guess'd as much, by your sending for us. They treat us, Master Resource, like a couple of quacks, never apply but in desperate cases.

RESOURCE.

But in all diseases there are different degrees.

PILLAGE.

True ; for instance, if you find you are pretty near on a par, with perhaps a small balance per contra, summon your creditors, lay your conditions fully before them, convince them you have a fund to answer all their demands, and crave a respite for three or four years.

Sir ROBERT.

Just to call in my debts, and make the most of my other effects ?

RESOURCE.

True ; as the English merchants have a good deal of milk in their blood, that is a favour rarely refused.

T H E B A N K R U P T. 43

Sir ROBERT.

This, Master Pillage, will be only deferring the evil.

P I L L A G E.

That is, Sir Robert, as you manage the cards. Don't you see that the length of time, with the want or wish of ready money for trade, will dispose the bulk of your creditors to sell their debts at a loss of thirty or forty per cent ?

Sir ROBERT.

True.

R E S O U R C E.

No contemptible sum, when a man's dealings are large.

Sir ROBERT.

But how shall I profit by—

P I L L A G E.

What hinders you from privately buying the debts ?

Sir ROBERT.

That, indeed—

R E S O U R C E.

A fine fortune sav'd out of the fire.

P I L L A G E.

True. And now we talk of the fire, for a present supply, you may burn a warehouse or two, after it has been gutted of all its contents.

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RESOURCE.

And recover the full amount of the policy.

PILLAGE.

Did you never try that?

RESOURCE.

No, I don't think he has done any thing in the fire way yet; have you, Sir Robert?

Sir ROBERT.

Never once came into my head.

PILLAGE.

May be not; oh! for a fertile brain, there are many means to be used; but what d'ye say to my plan?

Sir ROBERT.

What, the summoning scheme? I am so involved, that I am afraid that project will never prevail.

PILLAGE.

Then you have nothing left but a statute.

Sir ROBERT.

But if my certificate should not be granted?

PILLAGE.

That is my proper business, Sir Robert. If we find your creditors inclined to be crusty, there will be no difficulty in creating demands to get number and value.

Sir

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Sir ROBERT.

That will swell my debts to a monstrous amount.

RESOURCE.

So much the more for your honour; consider you are a knight, and your dignity demands you should fail for a capital sum.

Sir ROBERT.

Does it?

PILLAGE.

To be sure. Why, you would not sneak into the Gazette like a Birmingham button-maker.

RESOURCE.

Oh fie!

PILLAGE.

He would never after be able to shew his head upon Change.

RESOURCE.

Never, never.

PILLAGE.

And then, you know, what with the portable stuff, such as jewels, or cash, that he himself may secrete, and the dividends that fall to the share of his friends, which they will doubtless restore—

RESOURCE.

He will be fit to begin the world again with *eclat*.

PIL-

46 THE BANKRUPT.

PILLAGE.

In a much better condition than ever.

RESOURCE.

And his children's children will have reason to thank him.

Sir ROBERT.

But is there not some danger in concealing the portable stuff, as you call it?

PILLAGE.

Not in the least. Besides, to colour the business, you may collect a purse of light guineas, with an old batter'd family watch, and deliver them to the commissioners, on your first examination.

RESOURCE.

That will give an air of integrity.

Sir ROBERT.

You seem to think, then, Gentlemen, that it is the duty of every honest merchant to break once at least in his life, for the good of his family?

RESOURCE.

Not the least question of that.

PILLAGE.

Every day's practice confirms it. Well, Sir Robert, when shall I provide you the tackle?

Sir ROBERT.

The tackle!

PIL-

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PILLAGE.

In about a month or six weeks, I think, you may be made fit to appear in the papers.

Sir ROBERT.

In the Gazette, as a bankrupt?

RESOURCE.

Aye, but then no time must be lost.

PILLAGE.

Not a moment, for should they smother his design—

Sir ROBERT.

Gentlemen, I must decline your assistance.

PILLAGE.

How?

Sir ROBERT.

For, without considering the private injury I may do to particular persons, this mischievous method must soon affect the whole mercantile world.

PILLAGE.

Why, what has that—

Sir ROBERT.

Mutual confidence is the very cement of commerce. That weaken'd, the whole structure must fall to the ground.

RESOURCE.

Hey!

Sir

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Sir ROBERT.

From the practice of these infamous arts, as it is impossible they can be conceal'd, what suspicions, what jealousies must every man in trade entertain?

PILLAGE.

How!

Sir ROBERT.

What an injury besides, to those in my unhappy condition? the risks and losses unavoidably connected with commerce, procure the unsuccessful trader, generally the compassion, sometimes the friendly aid, of those of his order.

RESOURCE.

We know that well enough.

Sir ROBERT.

But when bankruptcy becomes a lucrative traffic, and men are found to fail with a view of making their fortunes, the unhappy and fraudulent will be confounded together, and punishment fall on his head, who has a title to pity.

PILLAGE.

The man's mad.

Sir ROBERT.

Perhaps I myself am a sacrifice to those very arts you have recommended so warmly. But there the mischief shall end. Men may suffer from my calamities, but they never shall by my crimes.

[Exit.]

PIL-

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PILLAGE.

Did you ever meet with such a squeamish old fool? what could he mean by sending for us?

RESOURCE.

Who can tell? his head's turn'd, I suppose.

PILLAGE.

I thought we had him sure; but how nimbly he has slipp'd through our fingers!

RESOURCE.

Necessity will soon bring him back to our hook. He is shy for the present, but I warrant he will bite bye and bye.

PILLAGE.

Or we shall lose a capital prize.

RESOURCE.

Indeed; should his friends interpose, and matters be compounded without us.

PILLAGE.

That I have a sure way to prevent. Before an hour is past, I will tear such a rent in his robe, as I defy all the botchers in Europe to mend.

RESOURCE.

By what means?

PILLAGE.

I know he is in the receipt of some government money; I will take care to saddle him with an extent.

RESOURCE.

That will do.

H

PIL-

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PILLAGE.

I shall only just go and take out a commission against five macaronies, who are joint annuitants to a couple of Jews.

RESOURCE.

But how can you lug them into a statute? they are no dealers, you know.

PILLAGE.

No, dealers? yes, but they are.

RESOURCE.

Aye, of what kind?

PILLAGE.

Why, why they are dealers of cards. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Lady RISCOUNTER, and Sir JAMES BIDDULPH.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

If you will walk in, Sir James, Sir Robert is a little busy at present, but he will wait upon you directly.

Sir JAMES.

I have no call, Madam, that prevents my attending his leisure.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

I fear the design of this visit, Sir James, is of a different nature from those we have lately receiv'd.

Sir JAMES.

I came, Madam, to offer my aid in detecting
and

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and punishing an infamous calumny that has made its way to the publick, this morning.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

But reports of this kind, when despised and neglected, gradually die of themselves. It is a most unlucky affair, I confess.

Sir JAMES.

Unlucky! most false and atrocious: I hope, Madam, we shall be able to discover its author.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

As to that, it is scarce worth the enquiry.

Sir JAMES.

How, Madam!

Lady RISCOUNTER.

We have family reasons, Sir James, for wishing to draw a veil over—

Sir JAMES.

A veil! I am astonish'd, Lady Riscounter!

Lady RISCOUNTER.

The loss of your alliance, indeed, which now we dare neither expect, nor desire, has mortified us all not a little. If any other means could be found to form a connection between us, and a person of your merit and rank, there is nothing, I am sure, I should so ardently wish.

Sir JAMES.

Your ladyship is most exceedingly kind.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

I hope the whole family, especially myself and
H 2 daugh-

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daughter, are not, through the error of one, to be punished with the loss of your friendship.

Sir JAMES.

You do me infinite honour.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Indeed, my Lucy, upon this occasion, felt chiefly for you; for tho' perhaps not so imposing and specious, as the girl whose lapse we lament, she has great goodness of heart, and a proper sense of your worth.

Sir JAMES.

Miss Lucy is most prodigiously—

Lady RISCOUNTER.

But Sir Robert's door opens, and as my presence may not be so proper upon this occasion, I take my leave, with the hopes of soon receiving a visit.

Sir JAMES.

I shall be happy, Madam, in seizing every occasion—your ladyship's—[*Exit Lady Riscounter.*] What can be the meaning of this? She seems to confirm and credit the infamous story. Sir Robert, I suppose, will explain it.

Enter Sir ROBERT.

Sir ROBERT.

Sir James, I scarce know how to accost you, but the confusion I feel at the unhappy cause of your visit.

Sir

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Sir JAMES.

Indeed, Sir Robert, I own myself greatly perplex'd. I enter'd your house, full of the warmest resentment, and prepar'd to take every active part in my power; but your lady has dropp'd some hints, as if you wish'd to stifle all further enquiry. Pray, Sir Robert, be candid and open. This, Sir, I think, I have right to demand.

Sir ROBERT.

Doubtless. Nor do I wish to conceal: there is room for suspicion, I own; so far Lady Riscounter is right; but yet, Lydia——

Sir JAMES.

You have then seen her, Sir Robert——

Sir ROBERT.

Not ten minutes ago. Her surprise seem'd so sincere, and so artless, and——

Sir JAMES.

Without doubt——

Sir ROBERT.

And such strong marks of truth, both in her words, and her looks, that I confess——perhaps it was a fatherly weakness, I could not help giving credit to all that she said.

Sir JAMES.

You did her but justice, I am sure. I will pawn my life upon her honour and faith.

Sir

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Sir ROBERT.

But yet how to reconcile—for, Sir James, I will be impartial ; some accounts I have had—

Sir JAMES.

Time can only do that. Deep-laid designs are not discovered at once. If we can but get at the clue.—And what steps have you taken? have you been, or sent to the printer's?

Sir ROBERT.

No. I did think of going, but my lady persuaded me, that the step would be wrong.

Sir JAMES.

For which she had very good reasons, no doubt. Will you give me leave to accompany you thither?

Sir ROBERT.

If you think it right.

Sir JAMES.

The very first thing you should do.

Sir ROBERT.

But should not we consult my lady about it?

Sir JAMES.

The very last thing you should do.

Sir ROBERT.

And why so?

Sir JAMES.

I must beg to conceal my reasons at present. I too, have my suspicions, Sir Robert.

Sir

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Sir ROBERT.

You have.

Sir JAMES.

Which I fancy you will soon find to be better founded than those of your family.

Sir ROBERT.

Not unlikely, Sir James.

Sir JAMES.

Come, Sir, my chariot is ready.

Sir ROBERT.

I attend you, Sir James.

[Exit.]

End of the SECOND ACT.

ACT.

ACT III.

Enter ROBIN, and a *Servant of Sir*
ROBERT.

ROBIN.

MY service to Miss Kitty, and I should be happy to have the honour of her ear a moment.

SERVANT.

Of her ear!

ROBIN.

These low fellows know nothing of the phrases in fashion, mere Vandals and Goats : but I must accommodate myself to their country. Will you tell Miss Kitty Combrush, that I should be glad to speak with her, when she is at leisure?

SERVANT.

Now I understand what you mean, that will I, Master Robin. *[Exit.*

ROBIN.

Damn'd provoking however, to have our ship sunk just as we were entering the port; this could not happen but by the contrivance of some of the crew : our captain too is most horribly hurt. This jade, I am convinc'd, is in the whole of the plot; but her own art, and the skill of her prompter, will make it difficult to get at the bottom.

Enter

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Enter KITTY.

KITTY.

Bless me, Mr. Robin, after what has pass'd,
I little expected to see you again at our house.

ROBIN.

What injustice both to me and yourself!

KITTY.

How so, Mr. Robin?

ROBIN.

To your powerful attractions, and my proper
discernment.

KITTY.

I did not know I had any such things, Mr.
Robin.

ROBIN.

Infinite! but above all your penetration is the
most surprising to me. The conjuror in the Old
Bailey is a fool compar'd to Miss Kitty. You
are absolutely as knowing as one of the Civils,
if the latter part of your prediction was but as
fully accomplish'd.

KITTY.

What was that?

ROBIN.

Our cohabitation in the same house, notwith-
standing——

KITTY.

Time may bring that about, Mr. Robin.

I

ROBIN.

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ROBIN.

I don't comprehend how that can happen.

KITTY.

No! why, to make your master amends for the loss of Miss Lydia, suppose we were to give him Miss Lucy—

ROBIN.

D'ye call that making my master amends?

KITTY.

She is a good showy girl, and her fortune—

ROBIN.

Will be no temptation to him, I know he detests her.

KITTY.

Indeed!

ROBIN.

Cordially. So that if that be the only means, I have nothing left but despair. Oh! Miss Kitty, think what misery! that tender frame has a tear for pity, I'm sure; to be deprived of the warmest wish of my life, to be cut off for ever—

KITTY.

And do you really think as you say?

ROBIN.

Nothing but an amiable ignorance of your own charms, could for a moment induce you to doubt it.

KITTY.

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K I T T Y.

Suppose then, Mr. Robin, we were to live under our own roof, instead of that of another, don't you think it would be mending the matter?

R O B I N.

It would be Elysium, my angel. But how to get at the means?

K I T T Y.

If that is your objection, they may be easily found.

R O B I N.

Does my lovely Kitty think I can have any other?

K I T T Y.

Then since that is the case, Mr. Robin, it is but right I should explain to you, what I meant, by my riddle, this morning. But see that we are safe.

R O B I N.

Not a soul.

K I T T Y.

You must know, then, that this whole affair of Miss Lydia is my lady's contrivance.

R O B I N.

What, is that whole story a fiction?

K I T T Y.

A mere sham; nothing else; and to bring about Sir James's marriage with Lucy, her motive.

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ROBIN.

I conceive.

KITTY.

Now, as the project would not do without my assistance, my lady gave me (here it is, stuck in my stays) a note for five hundred pounds, if the match is broke off; and a thousand, should Miss Lucy's take place.

ROBIN.

Hum—hum—hum—500—hum—hum—Rebecca Riscounter—it is just as you say.

KITTY.

Now, as matters stand, you see I am entitled to the first 500 directly, and, with your assistance, perhaps the other may follow.

ROBIN.

Not unlikely. But hold a little, dear Kitty, a little caution may not be amiss. This mistress of yours is a damn'd artful woman; she has trick'd others, and won't scruple cheating of you.

KITTY.

I don't understand you.

ROBIN.

It is not quite clear that this note is a good one.

KITTY.

How!

ROBIN.

I mean such a one as she will be obliged hereafter to pay.

KITTY.

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KITTY.

Then the business shall be blown up in an instant.

ROBIN.

Too late. She will only laugh at you when her ends are obtain'd.

KITTY.

Then what steps can we take?

ROBIN.

There is an old master of mine, who lives in Brick-court in the Temple, as cunning a cur as ever hang'd an innocent man, or sav'd a rogue from the gallows. I'll run, and ask his opinion.

KITTY.

But won't that be betraying our secret?

ROBIN.

Counsellors, like confessors, are bound not to reveal their client's confession: besides, I can easily conceal the name of the party.

KITTY.

You will come immediately back?

ROBIN.

In an instant, unless I have your leave to go a step further.

KITTY.

Further!

ROBIN.

To Doctors Commons, for a little bit of parchment, that will soon unite us for ever.

KITTY.

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KITTY.

O law! you are in a vast prodigious great hurry; but, I think, Mr. Robin, you must do as you please.

ROBIN.

Thus let me acknowledge your kind condescension. For a moment then, my dear Kitty, adieu. [*Exit Kitty.*] So, now I have the means in my power to resettle all our matters again.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE, *A Printer's.*

MARGIN *discovered with News-papers, Account-books, &c.*

MARGIN.

September the 9th. Sold twelve hundred and thirty. June the 20th. Two thousand and six. Good increase for the time, considering too that the winter has been pretty pacific: dabbled but little in treasons, and not remarkably scurrilous, unless, indeed, in a few personal cases. We must season higher to keep up the demand. Writers in Journals, like rope-dancers, to engage the public attention, must venture their necks every step that they take. The pleasure people feel, arises from the risques that we run—what's the matter?

Enter DINGEY.

DINGEY.

Mr. Hyson has left the Answer to his last letter on East India affairs.

MAR-

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MARGIN.

A lazy rascal, now his letter is forgot, he comes with an answer. Besides, the subject is stale: Return it again. Are all our people in waiting?

DINGEY.

The Attorney General to the paper, that answers the law cases, is not come yet.

MARGIN.

Oh! that's Ben Bond'em the Bailiff; prudently done, perhaps he has a writ against one of our authors—Bid them enter, and call over their names.

DINGEY.

Walk in, Gentlemen.

Enter PEPPER, PLAISTER, RUMOUR, FORGE-'EM, FIBBER, COMMA, CAUSTIC, O'FLAM, and others.

DINGEY.

Politicians, pro and con, Messieurs Pepper and Plaister.

PEPPER, PLAISTER.

Here.

MARGIN.

Pepper and Plaister, as both the houses are up, I shall adjourn your Political Warfare 'till their meeting again.

PEPPER.

Don't you think the public would bear one skirmish more before we close the campaign? I have a trimmer here in my hand.

PLAIS-

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PLAISTER.

To which I have as tart a retort.

MARGIN.

No, no ; enough for the present. It is, Plaister, the proper timing the subject, that gives success to our labours. The conductor of a Newspaper, like a good cook, should always serve up things in their season : who eats oysters in June ? Plays and Parliament Houses are winter provisions.

PEPPER.

Then half the satire and salt will be lost : Besides, if the great man should happen to die, or go out.

MARGIN.

Pshaw ! it will do as well for the great man that comes in. Political papers should bear vamping ; like sermons, change but the application and text, and they will suit all persons and seasons.

PLAISTER.

True enough ; but mean time, what can we turn to ; for we shall be quite out of work ?

MARGIN.

I warrant you, if you an't idle, there's business enough, the press teems with fresh publications—Histories, translations, voyages—

PEPPER.

That take up as much time to read as to make.

MAR-

MARGIN.

And what with letters from Paris or Spaw, inundations, elopements, dismal effects of thunder and lightning, remarkable causes at country assizes, and with changing the ministry now and then, you will have employment, enough for the Summer.

PLAISTER.

And so enter upon our old trade in the winter?

MARGIN.

Aye, or for variety, as it must be tiresome to take always one side; you, Pepper, may go over to administration, and Plaister will join opposition. The novelty may perhaps give fresh spirits to both.

PEPPER.

With all my heart. A bold writer has now no encouragement to sharpen his pen. I have known the day when there was no difficulty in getting a lodging in Newgate; but now, all I can say, won't procure me a warrant from a Westminster Justice.

MARGIN.

You say right, hard times, master Pepper, for persecution is the very life and soul of our trade; but don't despair, who knows how soon matters may mend? gentlemen, you may draw back.—Read the next.

DINGEY.

Criticks—Thomas Comma, and Christopher Caustic.

K

MARGIN

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MARGIN.

Where are they?

DINGEY.

As you could not find them in constant employment, they are engaged by the great, to do the articles in the Monthly Reviews.

MARGIN.

I thought they were done by Doctor Doubtful, the Deist.

DINGEY.

Formerly, but now he deals in manuscript sermons, writes religious essays for one of the Journals.

MARGIN.

Then he will soon sink. I foresaw what would come of his dramming. Go on.

DINGEY.

Collectors of paragraphs, Roger Rumour, and Phelim O'Flam.

RUMOUR, FLAM.

Here.

DINGEY.

Fibber and Forge'em, composers and makers of ditto.

FIBBER, FORGE'EM.

Here.

MARGIN.

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MARGIN.

Well, Rumour, what have you brought for the press?

RUMOUR.

I have been able to bring you no Positives.

MARGIN.

How! no Positives?

RUMOUR.

Not one. I have a Probability from the court end of the town; and two good Supposes out of the city.

MARGIN.

Hand them here—[reads.] “ It is probable, “ that if the King of Prussia should join the Czar- “ ina, France will send a fleet into the Medi- “ terranean, which, by giving umbrage to the “ Maritime powers, will involve Spain by “ its Family Compact. To which, if Austria “ should refuse to accede, there may be a power- “ ful diversion in Poland, made conjunctly by “ Sweden and Denmark. And if Sardinia and “ Sicily abide by the treaties, the German Prin- “ ces can never be neuter; Italy will become the “ seat of war, and all Europe soon set in a flame. —Vastly well, master Rumour, finely confused, and very alarming. Dingey, give him a shilling for this. I hope no other paper has got it?

RUMOUR.

Oh fie! did you ever know me guilty of such a—

MARGIN.

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MARGIN.

True, true, now let us see your Supposes—
[Reads.] “It is supposed, if Alderman Mango
“should surrender his gown, he will be succeed-
“ed by Mr. Deputy Drylips, and if my Lord
“Mayor should continue ill of the gout, it is
“supposed the swan-hopping will cease for this
“season.—That last suppose is fudged in, why,
would you cram these upon me for a couple?

RUMOUR.

As distinct as can be.

MARGIN.

Fye, remember our bargain. You agreed to
do the court of Aldermen always for six pence.

RUMOUR.

What if a Common Hall should be called?

MARGIN.

Oh! then you are to have three-pence a mo-
tion, I know that, very well: I am sure no gen-
tleman can accuse me of being sneaking. Din-
gey, give him six pence for his supposes. Well,
Phelim O’Flam, any deaths in your district?

O’FLAM.

The devil a one.

MARGIN.

How! none?

O’FLAM.

O yes, a parcel of nobodies, that died worth
nothing at all. Fellows that can’t pay for a fu-
neral.

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neral. Upon my conscience, I can't think what becomes of the folks for my part, I believe, all the people who live in town, fall down dead in the country, and then too, since doctor Dispatch is gone to the Bath, patients linger so long.

MARGIN.

Indeed!

O'FLAM.

To be sure they do. Why, I waited at the Jolly Topers, a matter of two days and a half, for the last breath of Lady Dy Dropsy, for fear some other collector should catch it.

MARGIN.

A long time indeed.

O'FLAM.

Wasn't it? considering that she had two consultations besides, devilish tough. Mr. Margin, I shall quit the mortality walk, so provide yourself as soon as you can.

MARGIN.

I hope not.

O'FLAM.

Why, what will I do? I am sure the deaths wont keep me alive, you see I am already stripp'd to my shrowd; since November, the suicide season, I have not got salt to my porridge.

Enter Sir THOMAS TRADEWELL.

Sir THOMAS.

Is your name Matthew Margin?

MARGIN.

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MARGIN.

It is, and what then?

Sir THOMAS.

Then, pray what right had you to kill me in your last saturday's paper?

MARGIN.

Kill you!

Sir THOMAS.

Ay, Sir, here the article is; surely the law has some punishment for such insolent rascals as you.

MARGIN.

Punishment! and for what? but, after all, what injury have you sustain'd?

Sir THOMAS.

Infinite. All my agents are come post out of the country, my house is crouded with cousins, to be present at the opening my will, and there has been (as it is known she has a very good jointure) no less than three propofals of marriage already made to my relict.

MARGIN.

Let me look at the paragraph. [*Reads.*]
“ Last night, after eating a hearty supper, died
“ suddenly, with his mouth full of custard, Sir
“ Thomas Tradewell, knight, an amiable com-
“ panion, an affectionate relation, and a friend
“ to the poor.”—O’Flam, this is some blunder
of yours; for you see, here the gentleman is,
and alive.

O’FLAM.

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O'FLAM.

So he says, but the devil a one in this case would I believe but himself; because why, I was told it by Jeremy O'Turlough, his own body-chairman, my dear: by the same token, I treated him with a pint of porter for the good news.

Sir THOMAS.

Vastly oblig'd to you, Mr. O'Flam, but I have nothing to do with this wretched fellow; it is you, Margin, shall answer for this.

MARGIN.

Why, Sir Thomas, it is impossible but now and then we must kill a man by mistake. And in some measure to make amends, you see what a good character the paper has given you.

Sir THOMAS.

Character!

MARGIN.

Aye, Sir, I can tell you I have had a crown for putting in many a worse.

O'FLAM.

Aye, Sir Thomas, consider of that, only think what a comfort it is, to live long enough after you are dead, to read such a good account of yourself in the papers.

Sir THOMAS.

Ha! ha! ha! what a ridiculous rascal! but I would advise you, gentlemen, not to take such liberties with me for the future. *[Exit.]*

O'FLAM.

O'FLAM.

Indeed and we won't; and I here give Mr. Margin my word, that you shan't die again, as long as you live, unless, indeed, we get it from under your own hand.

Enter Sir ROBERT RISCOUNTER,
and Sir JAMES BIDDULPH.

Sir ROBERT.

Where is this Margin, this impudent, rascally Printer?

MARGIN.

Hey day! what's the matter now?

Sir JAMES.

Curb your choler, Sir Robert.

Sir ROBERT.

A pretty fellow, indeed, that every man's and woman's reputation must be subject to the power of his poisonous pen.

Sir JAMES.

A little patience, Sir Robert.

Sir ROBERT.

A land of liberty, this! I will maintain it, the tyranny exercised by that fellow, and those of his tribe is more despotic and galling, than the most absolute monarch's in Asia.

Sir JAMES.

We'll, but—

Sir ROBERT.

Sir ROBERT.

Their thrones claim a right only over your persons and property, whilst this mungrel, squatt-
ing upon his joint stool, by a single line, pro-
scribes and ruins your reputation at once.

Sir JAMES.

Sir Robert, let me crave—

Sir ROBERT.

And no situation is secure from their insults.
I wonder every man is not afraid to peep into a
paper, as it is more than probable that he may
meet with a paragraph, that will make him un-
happy for the rest of his life.

MARGIN.

But, Gentlemen, what is all this business about?

Sir ROBERT.

About? zounds, Sir, what right had you to
ruin my daughter?

MARGIN.

I? I know nothing of you nor your daughter.

Sir ROBERT.

Sir James Biddulph, you have it, produce the
paper.

Sir JAMES.

There is no occasion for that, the affair is so
recent, I dare say the Gentleman will remember
the passage; this, Sir, is the Banker, the father,
with whose daughter you was pleased to take those
insolent freedoms, this morning.

L

Sir

Sir ROBERT.

And this, Sir, the amiable Baronet, from the West end of the Town.

MARGIN.

I recollect. Well, gentlemen, if you have brought any paragraphs to contradict the report, I am ready to insert them directly.

Sir ROBERT.

And so, you rascal, you want us to furnish fresh food for your paper?

MARGIN.

I do all I can to keep my scales even; the charge hangs heavy here; on the other side, you may throw in the defence, then see which will weigh down the other.

Sir ROBERT.

Indeed, Sir James Biddulph, if he does that—

Sir JAMES.

That! can that paltry expedient atone for his crime? will the snow that is sullied recover its lustre? so tender and delicate, Sir Robert, is the fame of a lady, that once tainted, it is tarnish'd for ever.

Sir ROBERT.

True enough.

MARGIN.

I could bear no ill-will to your daughter, as I know nothing about her.

Sir

Sir ROBERT.

Indeed, Sir James, I don't see how he could.

Sir JAMES.

Is his being the instrument of another man's malice, a sufficient excuse?

Sir ROBERT.

So far from it, that it enhances the guilt. Zounds, Sir James, you are a Parliament-Man, why don't you put an end to this practice?

MARGIN.

Ay, let them attack the press, if——

Sir ROBERT.

Have a care of that; no no, that must not be done.

Sir JAMES.

No man, Sir Robert, honours that sacred shield of freedom more than myself.

Sir ROBERT.

I dare say.

Sir JAMES.

But I would not have it serve to shelter these pests, who point their poison'd arrows against the peace of mankind.

Sir ROBERT.

By no means in the world. Let them be dragg'd from behind it directly.

L 2

MARGIN.

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MARGIN.

Ay, do destroy the watchful dogs that guard
and cover your flocks.

Sir JAMES.

You guard, you cover!

MARGIN.

Ay, who but us alarm the nation when bad
designs are on foot?

Sir ROBERT.

In that respect, they are very useful no doubt.

Sir JAMES.

Are they therefore entitled to give the alarm,
when no such design is intended?

Sir ROBERT.

By no means. A pack of factious, infamous
scoundrels.

MARGIN.

It is we that supply the defects of the laws.

Sir JAMES.

You!

MARGIN.

By stigmatizing those offenders that they can-
not reach.

Sir ROBERT.

That, indeed serves to keep the guilty in awe.

Sir

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Sir JAMES.

And is a pretence for making the innocent the butts of their malice.

Sir ROBERT.

True, true, all is fish that comes to their nets.

Sir JAMES.

Besides, their slander is scattered so generally, and with so little discretion, that the deformity of vice is destroyed.

Sir ROBERT.

True.

Sir JAMES.

Bad men are made worse, by becoming totally callous, and even the good rendered careless, to that source of patriotism, that pride of virtue, the public opinion.

Sir ROBERT.

And they are much in the right on't.

MARGIN.

What, you are a courtier, I reckon? no wonder you wish the press was demolished.

Sir JAMES.

If ever that happens, to such miscreants as you 'twill be owing; nor will it surprize me, if all orders concur to give up a great public benefit, for the sake and security of private honour and peace.

Sir ROBERT.

Nor me neither.

MARGIN.

You would consent then to surrender the press?

Sir ROBERT.

I would sooner consent to be hang'd.

Sir JAMES.

And its unbounded licence continue?

Sir ROBERT.

I would much rather see it on fire.

MARGIN.

With respect to its general use——

Sir ROBERT.

Not the smallest doubt can be made.

Sir JAMES.

But, Sir Robert, then the abuse——

Sir ROBERT.

Is what no mortal can bear.

MARGIN.

But, Sir Robert, you would but just now——

Sir ROBERT.

I confess it, I did.

Sir JAMES.

Ay, but that was, Sir Robert, because.——

Sir

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Sir ROBERT.

For no other reason in life.

MARGIN.

My observation you allowed to be—

Sir ROBERT.

Pointed.

Sir JAMES.

And my reply—

Sir ROBERT.

Conclusive as could be.

MARGIN:

But then—

Sir ROBERT.

To be sure.

Sir JAMES.

Because why—

Sir ROBERT.

You are quite in the right.

O'FLAM.

Upon my soul, they have got the old gentleman into such puzzleation, that I don't believe he knows what he wishes himself. Stand by and let me clear up this matter a little. Hearkee, Mr. Sir Robert, if I understand your maning at all, it is, that provided people could be prevented from publishing, you are willing the press should be free.

Sir ROBERT.

That was my meaning no doubt.

O'FLAM.

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O'FLAM.

Upon my conscience, and nothing but reason. There, I believe, we are all of us agreed. How seldom would people differ, if once we could get them to be all of a mind? And now this difference is whole and compos'd, let me try if I can't make up the other. I understand here, old gentleman, you have had a daughter abused.

Sir ROBERT.

Most foully.

O'FLAM.

And you want to know who was the author?

Sir ROBERT.

That was my sole business here.

O'FLAM.

Then why could not you say so at first, without all this bothering and bawling? Well, master Margin, come give the old buck satisfaction.

MARGIN.

It was anonymous.

O'FLAM.

Upon my soul, and I thought so. That is the most damnedst, impudent son of a bitch, he had like to have brought me into three or four scrapes, by fathering his lies upon me.

Sir JAMES.

Will you give us leave to look at the hand?

MARGIN.

Freely, this is the paper.

Sir

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Sir JAMES.

Sir Robert, do you recollect to have seen this writing before?

Sir ROBERT.

It is James's, I know it as well as my own: here are his B's, his G's, and his T's.

Sir JAMES.

So I guess'd. Will you trust the paper with us?

Sir ROBERT.

Let him get it again, if he can.—Sir James, I shall expect you at home. *[Exit.]*

MARGIN.

I hope no bad use will be made of it.

Sir JAMES.

The worst use has already been made of it; but at parting, Mr. Margin, let me give you a piece of advice. Take care how you provoke the publick patience too far. You have set the laws at defiance, and long reign'd uncontroul'd, I confess; but don't wonder if the subjects of your slander forget there are laws in their turn, and, valuing an honest name more than their lives, should expose their lives to revenge it.

[Exit.]

O'FLAM.

Upon my soul, Mr. Margin, very wholesome advice, and will do you much good if you take it; but, above all, rid your hands of James Anonymous as soon as you can; you know it

M

was

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was he got you that beating.—That fellow has brought you into more scrapes than all your authors together.

Enter a SERVANT.

SERVANT.

Gentlemen, the milk porridge is ready.

A L L.

Let us start fair I beseech you. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Lady RISCOUNTER, LUCY,
and KITTY.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Sir James Biddulph is gone?

K I T T Y.

Yes, Madam, and with him my master.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

*Sir Robert! to what place, can you guess?

K I T T Y.

I should think, by what I overheard, to the printer's.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

To the printer's! of what use can that be?

K I T T Y.

I can't say; but your ladyship, I hope, will excuse me.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Excuse you, why child, what's the matter?

K I T T Y.

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KITTY.

I have heard some whispering among the clerks, as if things were not quite so well with my master.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

What, some little disappointments in trade?

KITTY.

Much worse, I am afraid; I don't know what it means; but they say an extent is brought into the house.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

With all my heart; let what will happen, it can be of little importance to me.

LUCY.

No, Madam!

Lady RISCOUNTER.

No, child, you can't suppose, but upon my marriage, I took care, at all events, to secure a proper provision.

LUCY.

Indeed! can that be done?

Lady RISCOUNTER.

A common caution, my dear; don't you see Mrs. Paduasoy rides in her coach, whilst half her husband's creditors are in gaol.

LUCY.

Is that the case?

Lady RISCOUNTER.

If wives were to have any thing to do with those

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those kind of creatures, who d'ye think would marry with people in business? and now I think on't, it will be so much the better; for the father's failure must in some measure fall on the daughter.

LUCY.

True; but your ladyship saw Sir James Bidulph.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

For a moment only, my dear.

LUCY.

Well, Madam, and——

Lady RISCOUNTER.

I only just threw out a hint; to be more explicit now, would make him suspicious; we must give him time to digest his disappointment.

KITTY.

*As I live, Miss Lydia is coming.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Lydia!

Enter LYDIA.

LYDIA.

I beg your ladyship's pardon, for intruding without your permission; but, my unfortunate situation will, I hope, plead my excuse: I come, Madam, to beg your protection.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Mine, child?

LYDIA.

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LYDIA.

Your assistance, in detecting the authors of this horrid design.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

That, child, is properly your father's concern.

LYDIA.

True, Madam; but the relation your ladyship bears to his family might, I hope, induce you to do me this justice.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Justice, Lydia!—as it is my duty, I shall ever be ready to give my advice.

LYDIA.

That, Madam, is all that I want.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

As this affair has made such a noise, there remains but one step to be taken.

LYDIA.

Which is——

Lady RISCOUNTER.

A marriage with James.

LYDIA.

With James! and so sanctify the scandalous story.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

It may be alledged by the family, that the ceremony had pass'd before the detection.

LYDIA.

LYDIA.

Detection! I hope your ladyship does not suppose there is the smallest foundation?

Lady RISCOUNTER.

That I shall not pretend to determine. But, at all events, you are in the right to deny it.

LYDIA.

Your ladyship's indifference shocks me more than the—Your daughter, Lucy, will do me justice I am sure, she has been privy to every—

LUCY.

Me, Miss? I beg pardon for that: how should I know your Intrigues? I beg you will not involve me in your guilt.

LYDIA.

Nay, then it is in vain to struggle; I see, my ruin is resolv'd.

Enter Sir ROBERT.

Sir ROBERT.

Where is Lady Riscounter? well, my dear, we have got to the bottom of this infernal business at last—here, here it is, in the rascal's own hand.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Sir Robert!

Sir ROBERT.

Why, the paragraph was sent to the printer's by James.

Lady

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Lady RISCOUNTER.

Well?

Sir ROBERT.

So that you see proves the forgery plain.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Now I think it makes the fact more apparent.

Sir ROBERT.

How?

Lady RISCOUNTER.

By the confession of one of the parties.

Sir ROBERT.

That I confess, as it was voluntary—

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Makes it amount to a positive proof.

Sir ROBERT.

It looks very suspicious indeed.

Enter Sir JAMES BIDDULPH.

Sir ROBERT.

Here my lady, Sir James, thinks, that instead of clearing, this paper only serves to convince her.

Sir JAMES.

Is that your ladyship's judgment?

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Quite to a demonstration, Sir James.

Sir

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Sir JAMES.

But his policy.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Obvious enough ; to force the family to solicit his marrying the girl, as a favour.

Sir JAMES.

That, indeed!

Lady RISCOUNTER.

With the hopes, perhaps, of obtaining some additional advantage.

Sir ROBERT.

In return, no doubt, for his great condescension. An infamous——

Sir JAMES.

I should have thought the young lady's private fortune, and person, especially to one of his rank, a very sufficient inducement. But this Mr. James is an absolute Machiavel.

Sir ROBERT.

As fly a dog as ever existed.

Sir JAMES.

But could not we see him, Sir Robert?

Sir ROBERT.

The rascal is run off.

Sir JAMES.

Inde!

Sir

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Sir ROBERT.

We have search'd for him all the town over.

Sir JAMES.

That is unlucky, as I should have been glad to have ask'd him a question. I believe it is unnecessary to apologize to the family, for any part I take in this business.

Sir ROBERT.

We are all highly obliged.

Sir JAMES.

But I have received a letter, the contents of which astonish me much.

Sir ROBERT.

About the matter in hand?

Sir JAMES.

Indeed the writer is but a dependant of mine, but his veracity is out of the question, the facts must speak for themselves. Mrs. Kitty, you will be kind enough to stay here for a moment.

KITTY.

What can be the meaning of this?

Sir JAMES.

If the charge is false, I am sure, Lady Riscounter will pardon me for the sake of the motive. If true, she, in her turn, will stand in want of all our forgiveness.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Me! who will dare to impeach my conduct, Sir James?

N

Sir

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Sir JAMES.

Your ladyship's patience, a moment. This paper, Sir Robert, charges Lady Riscounter with being the sole contriver of this villainous project.

Sir ROBERT.

How!

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Me!

Sir JAMES.

With a view of dissolving the contract between your fair daughter and me.

Sir ROBERT.

To what purpose? what end?

Sir JAMES.

One that does me too much honour, I own, the bringing about a union between Miss Lucy and me.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

A most probable story, indeed: your informer's name, if you please.

Sir JAMES.

A servant who has oft attended me here.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

And he receiv'd it from——

Sir JAMES.

One of your ladyship's women; there she stands, I believe.

LYDIA

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LYDIA.

Is it possible that you, Kitty—

Sir ROBERT.

Patience, Lydia, a moment.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

And you think this paltry plot, obviously fram'd by a couple of servants, (unless you condescend to be the contriver yourself) will justify you in bringing this charge against a person of my rank and condition.

Sir ROBERT.

Fie, fie, Sir James, that is too presumptuous indeed.

Sir JAMES.

Why, I should not have ventur'd, I believe, if I had not to produce a more unexceptionable witness than these.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Name the person directly.

Sir JAMES.

Lady Riscounter herself.

Sir ROBERT.

What?

Sir JAMES.

There is a little billet contain'd in this letter, where your ladyship promises a capital sum, when some certain services are fully perform'd.

Sir ROBERT.

By your leave, Sir James, let me look. Oh,
N 2 clear,

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clear, clear, it is her hand, there is no denying of this.

Sir JAMES.

I fancy Mrs. Kitty will own it. Otherwise my servant is below to confront her.

Sir ROBERT.

Well, what reply do you make to all this?

KITTY.

I beg pardon, Sir, of my mistress, and you.

Sir ROBERT.

Pardon.

KITTY.

I own the accusation is just, though I little thought Mr. Robin would betray me.

Sir ROBERT.

Do you? and what an ungrateful wretch must you be? you have been but a poor instrument only. But is it possible you, Lady Riscounter, could so entirely forget what you owe to me, and your——

Lady RISCOUNTER.

I see, Sir Robert, you are so far prepossess'd, that all I can say——

Sir ROBERT.

Say, Madam, what can be said for such——

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Nay, Sir, I am not going to make a formal defence, it is not worth my while, nor would you have leisure to hear it: if you will walk
down

THE BANKRUPT. 93

down, you will find another sort of business, that demands your attention.

Sir ROBERT.

Madam!

Lady RISCOUNTER.

The house fill'd with a new kind of customers.

LYDIA, Sir ROBERT, Sir JAMES.

How!

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Only an extent, to seize on all his effects.

LYDIA, Sir ROBERT, Sir JAMES.

Is it possible!

Lady RISCOUNTER.

The world will therefore see how ill I am treated—but don't imagine, Sir Robert, that the provision I derive from her father, shall be lavished to lessen your debts, or be employ'd in support of their author.

LUCY.

Your ladyship will have more prudence, no doubt.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

No, child, we will quit this mansion directly, and leave him for consolation to the care of his daughter.

LYDIA.

A more precious trust, I could never receive. Your treachery to me, Madam, I could both despise and forgive: but your insolent triumph, at the distress of an unfortunate husband, gives you

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you a pre-eminence above the worst of your sex. If, Sir, what you are pleased to call mine, can either reinstate, or assist you, I beg it may be all employ'd in the service.

Sir ROBERT.

Nay, pr'ythee, Lydia—

LYDIA.

You see, Sir James Biddulph, there are new obstacles oppos'd to your purpose.

Sir JAMES.

If you mean those her ladyship has been pleas'd to produce, they add only an additional strength to my wishes. The piety with which this great, this first duty is discharg'd, must accompany every other relation in life. I applaud, and shall be happy to join in your purpose.

Lady RISCOUNTER.

Come, Lucy, let us leave these romantick creatures together, they are only fit for each other; when your effects are convey'd to proper trustees, I shall take care to put in my claim.

[Exeunt Lady Riscounter and Lucy.]

Sir ROBERT.

Unfeeling, insolent woman! but thy goodness, Lydia, supplies every loss, nor will my creditors, when they find I never deceiv'd them, take advantage of thy filial affection.

Enter a CLERK.

What now?

CLERK.

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CLERK.

The Dutch mail is arrived.

Sir ROBERT.

Any private letters from Holland?

CLERK.

Your correspondents, Sir, have honour'd your bills.

Sir ROBERT:

And discharg'd them?

CLERK.

Every one.

Sir ROBERT.

And the report of their failing——

CLERK.

Was without the smallest foundation.

Sir ROBERT.

Heaven be prais'd; now, Lydia, thy father can look again with confidence in the face of his friends.

LYDIA.

A more real transport could never have reach'd me!

Sir ROBERT.

I know it, Lydia, I know it. This gentleman will both thank and reward you.

CLERK.

Sir, I would beg just to——

Sir

Sir ROBERT.

I guess what you mean; some inquisitive persons below; they shall be satisfied soon. I will attend them directly. *[Exit Clerk.]*

Sir JAMES.

Give me leave to join in the general joy. But what, Sir Robert, shall we do with this paper? I fancy my man is in waiting; Robin.

Enter ROBIN.

ROBIN.

Sir.

Sir JAMES.

You have been of singular service to-day, which I shall take good care to acknowledge. The worth of this note, as the conditions have fail'd——

ROBIN.

Like many more of its kindred, is reduc'd to waste paper, your honour; but as this happy turn has been chiefly owing to Kitty, I hope she will be restor'd to favour again.

Sir JAMES:

But consider, Robin, that was not her intention.

ROBIN.

But recollect, Sir, the temptation——

Sir ROBERT.

But the treachery——

ROBIN.

Five hundred pounds.

Sir

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Sir ROBERT.

That is true—as many, her superiors, tho' perhaps not her betters, are daily detected in doing things more criminal for less consideration, it is some excuse, I confess. But what says my Lydia?

LYDIA.

I shall be directed by you.

Sir ROBERT.

And now, my children, nothing remains but the last act, to establish your union, and if (as I am resolved to disengage myself from that bad woman, and the other cares of this world) you will suffer me to be a partaker of your domestic felicity——

Sir JAMES, LYDIA.

You cannot in any thing oblige us so much.

Sir ROBERT.

That is all I have to ask of you, or the world.
[Exeunt.]

F I N I S.

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††† The last article only was written by Mr. Thicknesse.



